1916
M26

JOSEPH MEDILL: AN EDITOR

BY

KATHRYN

B. A. Rockfor

T

Submitted in Partial Fulfil

MAST

IN HISTORY

IN

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

1916

The person ...rging this material is responsible ...its return to the library from which ...as withdrawn on or before the ...ate stamped below.
Lo...nutilation, and underlining of books are reasons for disciplinary action and may result in dismissal from the University.
To renew call Telephone Center, 333-8400
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS LIBRARY AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
BUILDING USE ONLY
AUG 21 1980
AUG 21 1980
L161—O-1096

JOSEPH MEDILL: AN EDITOR OF THE OLD SCHOOL

BY

KATHRYN MADDOCK

B. A. Rockford College, 1915

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

IN HISTORY

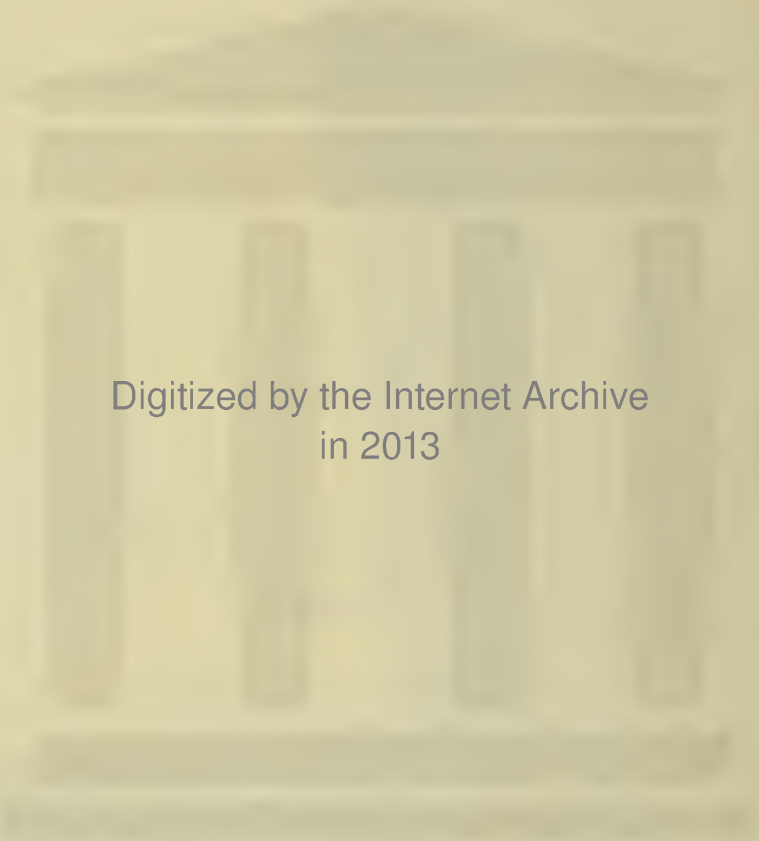
IN

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

1916



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

http://archive.org/details/josephmedilledit00madd

1915
M26
20c16

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

June 2 1916

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY Kathryn Maddock

ENTITLED Joseph Medill

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts

Everett Sharp — In Charge of Thesis

Head of Department

Recommendation concurred in:*

Committee on Final Examination*

*Required for doctor's degree but not for master's.

343034

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

I. SKETCH OF HIS LIFE 1

Ancestry

Boyhood

Education
Law
Acquaintance with newspapers

Early experience as an editor
Coshocton Republican
Cleveland Leader

Connection with the Chicago Tribune
Campaign of 1860
Washington correspondent

Civil War
Service of his brother in the army
The Union League of America
Right of Soldiers to vote in 1864
Medill Editor-in-chief, 1863-6

Editorship of Horace White
Member Constitutional Convention, 1869-70
Election as Mayor of Chicago
Trip abroad

Medill as editor-in-chief, 1874-99
Personal peculiarities

Death

II. MEDILL AND POLITICS, 1849-61 16

Beginning of the Republican party in Ohio
Correspondence on the subject

Early Republicanism in Illinois
Decatur convention
Bloomington - Lincoln's "Last Speech"
Lincoln-Douglas debates

Presidential campaign of 1860

Medill's opinion of Dougles as a candidate
" " " Bates " " "
" " " Seward " " "
" " " Lincoln " " "

Page

II. MEDILL AND POLITICS, 1849-61 (Continued) 16

Medill as Washington correspondent 1859-61
On disunion sentiment among Northern Democrats
On Seward
On Douglas
An experience in Washington
On the situation in the winter of 1861
Farewell to Washington

III. MEDILL AND POLITICS, 1861-73 32

Characteristics as a politician

During the Civil War
Tribune on the financial policy of the administration, 1861.
The Tribune and the Times
The Tribune and secessionists
Letters from Medill during days of defeat
Support of Lincoln, 1864

Medill on Reconstruction

During Horace White's editorship of the Tribune
Member Constitutional Convention, 1869-70
Minority Representation proposed by him

Member Civil Service Commission, 1871

Mayor of Chicago, 1871-73
City finance in difficulties
"Mayor's Bill" passed
Sunday closing law enforced

IV. MEDILL AND SOME POLITICAL ISSUES AFTER THE CIVIL WAR . 48

Party loyalty of the Tribune under him

His position on: the tariff
the silver question
national finance
prohibition
railroads and monopolies
education
labor problems
woman suffrage

Page

V. MEDILL IN HIS CONNECTION WITH PARTIES AND PARTY MEN AFTER THE CIVIL WAR 63

Opposed Grant for a third term

Political relations with Blaine

Political relations with Cullom
Letters to Cullom

Notice of Theodore Roosevelt

Medill in the presidential campaign of 1888

Some characteristics of Medill as a party politician

VI. THE BUSINESS MANAGING OF A NEWSPAPER. 74

Characteristics as a journalist

The Tribune, 1855-1874

The staff, 1874-1899

The financial success of Medill and the Tribune

Journalistic features of interest in the Tribune
Commercial expansion before the Civil War in the West

Growth of the news service during the war: formation of the Western Associated Press; inauguration of a Sunday issue

Various departments in the paper under Medill's editorship

Rivalry with the Chicago Tribune

Rivalry with other cities

Medill one of the "old school" of journalists

CHAPTER I. A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE.

Joseph Medill's life, from 1823 to 1899, covers years that are full of interest for the student of American history. The period in which he was actively concerned with politics and with journalism in the United States, covering roughly the middle and latter half of the nineteenth century, was one of rapid growth and change, especially in the Middle West, which he represents. And his influence as a Republican editor in Chicago, keenly interested in things political, and alert to catch the drift of public sentiment throughout the nation as a whole, as well as in his own neighborhood, was by no means inconsiderable. His persistent, indomitable energy, and his quick comprehension of situations, combined with a forcefulness which often even made him willful and headstrong, and which is markedly reflected in his writing, these were characteristics which made him a distinctive figure throughout his long service as editor of the Chicago Tribune.

A friend of his family writes, "If you will keep in mind that the Medill characteristics are Irish, it may account for many things."[1] His father and mother were, it is true, of Scotch-Irish origin, and came to this country from the north of Ireland.[2] The name was originally English, Dill, then Scotch, McDill, and in the Irish form Madill or Medill. Through Joseph Medill's great-grandmother on the maternal side the family traces a relationship with Sir Walter Scott.[3] His father, William Medill, living in Ulster,

---

[1] Letter from Calvin Cobb to author, April 11, 1916.
[2] Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899. Oral statement to author by Medill McCormick.
[3] Letter from Eleanor Medill Patterson to author, January 21, 1916.

and the son of a stern Presbyterian father, fell in love with Margaret Corbett, who was an Episcopalian, and, we are told, a woman of some determination. At any rate, William reached an agreement with his father, broke the family entail, and left with his bride for America, carrying with him a small patrimony in money.[1] It was in 1819 that he came, settled in New Brunswick, in a district which was afterward awarded to Canada by the Ashburton Treaty of 1842, and engaged in the trade of a shipwright.[2] Here Joseph was born, April 6, 1823,[3] a British citizen by nativity -- though at the time his family thought they were living in the United States.

After nine years the Medills migrated to Stark County, Ohio,[4] making the laboricus trip by way of the Erie Canal.[5] For twelve years Joseph lived on his father's farm, attending district school in the winter and assuming the responsibilities of the eldest brother in a family of three sons and two daughters. He graduated in 1843 at the Massillon village academy, and made some preparation for college: for several months he walked nine miles every Saturday to recite Latin, logic, and natural philosophy to a minister in Canton.[6] But he was unable to go to college. The family suffered a considerable loss by fire just at this time,[7]

---

[1] Oral statement to author by Medill McCormick.
[2] Letter from Eleanor Medill Patterson to author, January 21, 1916.
[3] Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Oral statement to author by Fred Hall.
[6] "Banner of Gold", official paper of the Bi-chloride of Gold Clubs and Keeley Institutes, Chicago, May 7, 1892.
[7] Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.

and Joseph went to study law in the office of Hiram Griswold and Seymour Belden,[1] instead of having an arts course. In November, 1846, he was admitted to the bar.[2]

For three years now he practiced at New Philadelphia, in partnership with George W. McIlvaine, who was in later life chief justice of Ohio.[3] The business of a young lawyer is proverbially small. Medill, it seems, did not have too much on hand to prevent him from spending a fair share of his time cultivating a friendship with the local editor and a familiarity with his paper. His interest in newspaper work had indeed begun even earlier than this. As he himself told of it, "When I was a law-student I lived near the county seat (Canton), and was fond of going over there. There were two papers published in the town, each, by the way, being bitterly opposed to the other. J. T. Elliott, nephew of the late Commander Elliott, was the editor of one, and a particular friend of mine. I was fond of going into his office and watching him set type." When Elliott was short of help Medill tried to fill in. He learned to set type, though his first effort contained, he said, about one-hundred and twenty-five mistakes, and "was hung up in the office as a standing joke on me for a long time"; he inked rollers and worked at the hand press at odd times when not studying. Then, according to his account, he tried his hand at editorials. "Sometimes one of them would send for me and remark,

---

[1] Andreas, A.T.; History of Chicago, p. 51.
[2] "Banner of Gold", May 7, 1892.
[3] Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.

'Say, Medill, think up some editorial and set it up, that's a good fellow.'

"'Can't think of it!' I'd say. 'Too busy, and I don't want to work anyhow.' ..... But the result would be that I would go at the case, and as I thought of what I wanted to say I would set it up."[1]

Having learned the business in this fashion, he now, in 1849, dissolved the partnership with McIlvaine,[2] and bought the Coshocton Whig. "The law lingered a little while", he said, "to claim the recusant, but he had tasted the delights of Franklin's nectar, and he never returned."[3] With himself installed as editor, and his brothers as assistants, he at once undertook to make the influence of the paper felt in local politics. The name he changed from Coshocton Whig to Republican: the enterprise evidently prospered, for two years later he was able to venture into the newspaper field in Cleveland as the owner of the Daily Forest City, a morning daily. In 1853 he merged it with a Free Soil paper, the True Democrat, of which John C. Vaughan had been editor, and entitled the combination the Cleveland Leader.[4] It was his first experience with dailies, but he seems to have built well, for the Leader is still an influential newspaper. The strong bias for Republicanism which Medill gave it endured; in 1888 it was called

---

[1] New York Tribune, March 27, 1899.
[2] Andreas, p. 51.
[3] Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.
[4] Andreas, p. 51.

"The head of the Republican press of northern Ohio."[1]

September 2, 1852, he was married to Katherine Patrick, daughter of James Patrick of New Philadelphia, who had been Indian Agent, Land Commissioner, and County Judge, and had published a Whig newspaper for twenty years.[2] Medill was connecting himself in every way with the politicians and newspaper men of the state, it seems. The beginnings of Western journalism, one writer has declared, were made in Ohio. If so, Medill may be said to have had a share in the origin as well as the bringing to full growth of the midwest newspaper.

He had been a correspondent of the New York Tribune,[3] and had entertained Greeley on the latter's trip to the Western Reserve in 1853. A series of articles which he wrote against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill especially attracted the attention of the New York editor,[4] and, according to an apocryphal story, it was to Medill at this time that he gave his famous advice, "Go West, young man; go West."[5] At any rate, in the winter of 1854-5, when Captain J. D. Webster of the Chicago Tribune offered Medill the position of managing editor, Greeley's influence helped decide him to take the step,[6] and he went armed with a letter of

---

[1]White, Z.L. Western Journalism, Harper's Mo. 77: 682.
[2]Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.
[3]Ibid.
[4]Manuscript by Miss Dodge in office of Chicago Tribune.
[5]Oral statement to author by George P. Upton.
[6]Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.

introduction from Greeley to Dr. Chas. H. Ray, an Illinois newspaper man. Ray, as editor of the Jeffersonian, of Galena, had supported independent views similar to Medill's with regard to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and slavery.[1] The two decided to buy into the Tribune; Medill took a third interest June 18, 1855, and in July Dr. Ray acquired one-fourth.[2] On July 21 Thomas A. Stewart, who had been connected with the paper from its founding, announced his retirement as editor and publisher; the firm of "Wright, Medill and Company" was formed, Timothy Wright, formerly a silent partner, becoming the senior member.[3]

In September the new arrangement introduced the first copper-faced type ever used in Illinois, and put in a Hoe steam press instead of the old Northrup. The Tribune took a new lease on life, so to speak. The population of Chicago was then about 80,000, and the circulation of the paper, which had been on July 1, 1440 daily and 1000 for the weekly edition, rose in less than three months to be 3000 daily and 4500 weekly.[4] Medill was now manager, and Dr. Ray editor.

In 1856 they consolidated the weekly edition with a paper which had been published by Zebina Eastman, the Western Citizen, or Free West.[5] In spite of their progressive management, however, they suffered severely from the panic of 1857, and were forced to combine, on July 1, 1858, with the Democratic Press,[6] in an attempt to weather the storm. The addition of the

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, June 10, 1897.
[2] Ibid., June 10, 1897.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Blanchard, Rufus; Discovery and Conquests of the Northwest with the History of Chicago, vol. 2, p. 231.
[5] Blanchard, v.2, p. 255.
[6] New York Tribune, March 27, 1899.

two Press editors, John L. Scripps and William Bross, gave the paper, now called the Press and Tribune, an unusually able editorial board. Scripps became senior editor. Ray, Medill, and Bross also each possessed the veto on material. Scripps had been connected with the Tribune as early as 1848, and had left in 1852 to found with Bross the Democratic Press.[1] Although this paper began its career in the Democratic ranks, it soon shifted to the Free Soilers and then to Republicanism.

In spite of their efforts, however, the firm went into bankruptcy in November, 1858. An extension of three years was obtained on their obligations, but they were able to liquidate them within twenty-nine months.[2]

The Press and Tribune was extending its influence throughout Illinois. It supported Lincoln in the senatorial campaign of 1858, and soon took up his candidacy for the presidential nomination.[3] During the winters 1859-60 and 1860-61 Medill served as the Washington correspondent:[4] his political experience and connections were constantly widening. He was one of the Illinois men who vigorously campaigned for Lincoln, and who stood by him through the years of the war which followed. Among the troops which left from Chicago for service during the Civil War, he took an especial interest in Company G of the Eighth Illinois Cavalry, for his brother, William Medill, was its captain, and

---

[1]Blanchard, v. 2, p. 230, 232.
[2]New York Tribune, March 27, 1899.
[3]Scott, Newspapers of Illinois, p. XCI.
[4]Chicago Press and Tribune, 1859,-60,-61.

among its numbers were twenty from the Tribune office.[1] His brother's death, as the result of a wound received soon after the battle of Gettysburg, brought the reality of the war even more closely home to him.

He took part in the formation, in 1862, of the "Union League of America", a secret organization to oppose the Southern societies which were springing up, and became its president.[2] Chapters were distributed over all the northwest, with the object "to preserve Liberty and the union of these United States; to maintain the Constitution thereof, and the supremacy of the laws; to put down the enemies of the government and thwart the designs of traitors and disloyalists; and to protect and strengthen all loyal men, without regard to sect, condition , or party."[3] It does not seem to have exercised any marked influence. Another movement was the organization of the Sanitary Fair, in which both he and Mrs. Medill were actively interested.[4] During the siege of Richmond he visited Grant at the front, with the purpose, so his daughter says, "to enable him to judge of conditions at first hand, and, undoubtedly, to advise the General."[5] From November 1, 1863, till August 1, 1866, Medill was editor-in-chief of the Tribune.[6] In this capacity he urged that the soldiers at the front should not lose the right to vote in the presidential

---

[1]Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.
[2]Currey, J. Seymour; Chicago, Its History and Its Builders, v.2, p. 126.
[3]Ibid.
[4]Letter from Eleanor Medill Patterson to author, January 21,1916. Oral statement to author by George P. Upton.
[5]Letter from Eleanor Medill Patterson to author, January 21,1916.
[6]Chicago Tribune, June 10, 1897.

election, and aided in the passage of laws which created a solid soldier vote for Lincoln in 1864.[1] His last service for Lincoln was performed the following year, when, on May 3, as a member of a Chicago committee of one hundred, he helped escort the President's body to Springfield.[2]

Horace White, later of the New York Evening Post, was editor of the Tribune after the Civil War. He supported Grant in 1868,[3] but went astray on free trade doctrines and, last heresy of all in the eyes of the party men, joined the Liberal-Republican movement of 1871-2, with Horace Greeley as presidential candidate. Medill was not in accord with his views, and drifted into more active participation in city and state politics on his own account.[4] He wrote for the paper, but was more often treated as an outside correspondent than as a member of the staff. Horace White was not inclined to grant him much power and credit in the conduct of the Tribune.[5]

His interest, thus, turned elsewhere. In 1869 he was elected a member of the convention for revising the state constitution which met at Springfield. He took a prominent part in the proceedings, and especially brought himself before the public by introducing and carrying through a provision for the representation of the minority party in the legislature.[6] Then,

---

[1]Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899. Andreas, v.3, p.51.
[2]Currey, v.3, p. 51.
[3]Blanchard, v.2, p. 233.
[4]Letter to author from Horace White, April 20, 1916.
[5]Oral statement to author by Elias Colbert.
[6]Moses; Illinois, Statistical and Historical, v.2, pp.788-91.

President Grant, with whom we are told he had talked concerning civil service reform during their previous acquaintance,[1] appointed him to a place on the commission of which George William Curtis was chairman, and which dissolved in 1872 without accomplishing anything of importance.[2] Medill's political activities of this period culminated in his election, November 7, 1871,[3] as mayor of Chicago, by a three-fourths majority.[4] The city was in straits of unusual difficulty after the great fire. A fusion "Fire-Proof" ticket with Medill at its head, was carried through on a platform of reform. The administration made a thorough readjustment of the city's finances, renovated the fire department, and rebuilt the city. In September, 1873, before his term was completed, Medill resigned and went abroad for a somewhat extended trip,[5] visiting Ireland, England, France, and Italy. He was fifty years old; it was twenty years exactly since he had founded the Leader, and eighteen since he joined the Tribune. This holiday, of about a year's length, marks a break in his career.

For immediately upon his return he completed the purchase of sufficient stock in the Tribune to give him control, and October 9, 1874, assumed the office of editor-in-chief once more,[6] to hold it without interruption until his death twenty-

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.
[2] Fish, Civil Service and the Patronage, p. 213.
[3] Moses and Kirkland; History of Chicago, p. 216.
[4] Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.
Bennett, Fremont O.; Politics and Politicians of Chicago, Cook County, and Illinois, p. 137.
[5] Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.
[6] Blanchard, v.2, p. 234.

five years later. Medill must have taken this action, it would seem, because of the growing impatience which he certainly felt under Horace White's editorship. The switch to the Greeley faction must have been the last straw for this dyed-in-the-wool Republican. It is plain that he had made up his mind that the state of things could not continue, for he told White and Alfred Cowles, another important stockholder, that either they must sell out to him or he would sell out to some one else.[1] Horace White says of the situation, "Mr. Medill and I differed radically in our views on the tariff question and in party service. I was a free-trader in principle, and an independent all around, whereas he was a believer in protective tariffs and in close adherence to the Republican party. I think now that his views were the best for the paper in a pecuniary sense." Medill's offer to buy, in 1874, he says, "was somewhat more than the property was worth as measured by its earnings then, and as I was burdened by a heavy debt incurred in the purchase of the shares of William Rand (a former stockholder) and both Mr. Cowles and myself had been heavy losers in the great fire in 1871 and in the panic of 1873, we decided to accept the offer. So the control of the paper passed to Mr. Medill. He and I buried the hatchet as to tariffs and independent politics and remained friends ever after."[2]

It has been said that during this next quarter of a century especially Medill was the Tribune. His record is the record of its pages. As an editor he interfered actively in the politics of Chicago, but beyond attending party conventions as

---

[1] Blanchard, v.2, p. 234.
[2] Letter to author from Horace White, April 20, 1916.

delegate, he held no more public offices. One reason for this was the handicap which a growing deafness placed upon him; it had begun to be serious while he was a correspondent in Washington. But, even this aside, he seems to have cared more to play politics through his paper than through holding office. The Tribune under his regime followed a conservative Republican policy pretty closely, though he was not afraid of speaking out boldly when he held views contrary to the orthodox. He refused offers of cabinet positions from Garfield and Harrison in 1881 and 1889.[1] He thought of running for Cullom's place in the Senate in 1894,[2] but decided not to, both because of Cullom's strength in his position and also because of his own deafness. He was one of the supporters, as vice-president, of the Chicago Interstate Industrial Exposition of 1873-6,[3] and was a member of the Board of Directors of the corporation which managed the World's Columbian Exposition.[4]

His appearance was described in 1895 in these words, "In person Mr. Medill is tall, slender, white-haired, with a slight stoop, the effect of advancing years".[5] The white hair had earlier been a good Irish red. He was known as a man of active, alert mind. He regretted that he had been deprived of a college education, but lack of training did not prevent him from taking a keen interest in scientific matters; he seems to have

---

[1] Hurd, Harvey and Sheppard, Robt. D.: Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois; v.1, p.368. According to this account Garfield offered him the position of Postmaster General, and when he refused, gave him his choice of any of the other places except two which had already been filled.

[2] Church, Charles A.; History of the Republican Party in Illinois, 1854-1912; p. 177. (Continued)

found a great deal of pleasure in riding scientific or pseudo-scientific hobbies such as simplified spelling, the sun-spot theory, and the blue-glass theory -- he had several interviews with Thomas A. Edison, at which they discussed the latter's experiments in saving the energy wasted in burning coal.[1] The Tribune braved public opinion for a good many years with "infinit", "favorit", "telegrafed", and the like. His interest in the Keeley Cure brought upon him the censure of Chicago doctors for advocating a quack remedy, and so he arranged a special test[2] of the institution and aired the whole matter in the columns of the Tribune. At another time, we are told, he suddenly dropped his sun-spot theory upon hearing for the first time of the existence of microbes, at once adopting the new explanation for all phenomena. A reporter sent in at this time an account of a plague in Egypt, ascribing the misfortune to sun-spots, but Medill knew better -- he went through the story crossing out the word "sun-spots" wherever it occurred, and substituting for it in each case "microbes".[3] In science, as in everything else connected with the paper, his word must be law.

He does not seem to have aroused bitter personal enemies; no more did he have intimate friends. Calvin Cobb, a friend

---

(Continued)
[3]Currey; v.3, p. 151.
[4]Ibid., p. 4.
[5]Abbott, Willis J.; Chicago Newspapers and their Makers; Review of Reviews 11: 649.

---

[1]Letter to author from George P. Upton, January 6, 1916.
[2]"Banner of Gold", May 7, 1892.
[3]Oral statement to author by James Keeley.

of his brother, Samuel Medill, writes, "I do not recall that Joseph Medill had any close friends, as in fact neither of the Medills were in any sense popular, but both were in fact rather cordially hated, which is true, probably, of nearly all editors. Joe Medill was a much more cordial man and a better 'mixer', as the term is used now, when away from Chicago. I ran across him in Denver once and found him to be quite 'one of the boys' at the Denver Club, even joining them in a baseball match as chief rooter in a game against the Cheyenne Club nine, composed of young cattle barons. He was extremely human that day, and it was difficult for me to believe that it was the sedate Joseph."[1] His circle of acquaintances and associates was wide, of course. He had more or less intimate connections with Horace Greeley, Thurlow Weed, Schuyler Colfax, James Gordon Bennett, James Watson Webb, William Cullen Bryant and Cassius M. Clay;[2] and, more especially in Chicago, with Judge David Davis, Judge Breese, W.C. Gcudy, George R. Davis, George Swift, and Judge Joseph E. Gary.[3] His correspondence was extensive, as Shelby M. Cullom testified, "He was one of the most indefatigable and inveterate letter-writers within my experience. From the time I was governor of Illinois, and even before that, and almost to the day of his death, he wrote me at great length upon every conceivable public question. His letters were always interesting, but as he did

---

[1]Letter to author from Calvin Cobb, April 11, 1916.
[2]Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.
[3]Oral statement to author by A. S. Trude.

not avail himself of the services of a stenographer, and as he wrote a very difficult hand to read, they became at times a trifle tiresome."[1]

During these years he spent a great deal of time away from Chicago -- we hear of him in Florida, at Niagara Falls, in California, and frequently in New York City, though always while away he kept in close touch by telegraph with the work of the paper.[2] In the spring of 1899, while at San Antonio, Texas, hoping to recuperate his health, he died suddenly, March 16, of heart disease. He was survived by two daughters, Mrs. Eleanor Medill Patterson and Mrs. Katherine Medill McCormick. The only other child, Josephine Medill died in January, 1892, and Mrs. Medill died October 1, 1894.[3]

---

[1]Cullom, Shelby M.; Fifty Years of Public Service; p. 437.
[2]Abbott, Review of Reviews, 11, p. 649.
[3]Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.

CHAPTER II. MEDILL AND POLITICS. 1849-1861.

In 1849, at twenty-six years of age, having practised law for three years, Medill began his career as an editor, and, as a natural consequence, his active participation in politics. Journalism and politics were then, even more than today, inseparable. He gave his allegiance to the Whigs, but there was enough of the radical in him to attract him to the more liberal section of the party. The Coshocton Whig became the Coshocton Republican in his hands. He entered the local campaign with zest, and contributed to a Whig victory. Assaults and attacks by Democrats fell to his lot, but he clung to his Whig principles.

After removing to Cleveland and founding the Cleveland Leader, he began to take an active part in state politics. The Whigs were badly split in Ohio; Medill hoped that they might be united. But the conservative platform which the Baltimore convention formulated for Winfield Scott's campaign was distasteful to him. In the following summer, as a member of the Free Soil minority at the Whig State convention at Columbus, he was a party to the split which took place over the nomination for governor, and which showed that the Whigs could not be reunited.[1] It was apparent, indeed, throughout the North that adherence on the old issue was no longer possible. Party differences were confused. Medill was one of those who believed that a new

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.
Smith, Theodore C., Liberty and Free Soil Parties in the Northwest, pp. 267-9.

alignment must take place.

He was now to participate in the beginning of a formal organization of the Republican party in Ohio. He was not the "founder of the National Republican Party", as some have claimed, but he did take a prominent part in one of the several local movements which were arising almost simultaneously over the country in the direction of the formation of such a new party.

The first of these was begun in Wisconsin, where meetings were held at Ripon, February 28 and March 20, 1854. A state convention at Jackson, Michigan, formally adopted the name Republican on July 6 of that year. A Wisconsin convention was held on July 13 at Madison, and an Ohio one at Columbus on the same day, though the Ohio party did not adopt the new name until 1855. In New York a local meeting under the name Republican had been held in the town of Friendship May 16, 1854. It was followed by other meetings, culminating in a state convention on August 16. A Maine convention took the name Republican on August 7.[1] The impulse was thus a general one throughout the northern states: no one man led it. Medill, however, with the keen political insight which distinguished him all his life, was one of the very first to perceive the trend of sentiment and to act in accordance with it. Between the time of Scott's defeat and the introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, in his correspondence with editors and politicians Medill sounded public opinion with regard to the formation of a new party. Horace

---

[1]Kleeberg, Formation of the Republican Party; p. 14.

Greeley wrote him a letter, the original of which was destroyed in the fire of 1871, but which Medill reproduced from memory as follows. "Go ahead, my friend, with your proposed Republican party, and God bless you. I hope you will have the best of luck. The time has indeed come to bury our beloved party; it is dead. We have many fool friends who insist that it is only in a comatose state and will recover, but I tell them it is dead--still I dare not yet in New York announce the demise of the party and call for the organization of a new one. But do you go ahead on the Western Reserve and commence the work. I like the name for it."[1] Thurlow Weed told him the time had not yet come for reorganization. William H. Seward replied favorably. The editors of Pennsylvania and the Middle West in general agreed with him, but were reluctant to begin the break.[2] In the Daily Forest City, and in its successor, the Cleveland Leader, Medill kept persistently advocating the idea, however.

The culmination of his efforts came at a meeting held in the office of the Leader in March, 1854. There were about twenty present, among them Senator Salmon P. Chase, who favored the name Free Democracy for the party. The majority, however, chose Republican. The simple platform which they adopted was as follows: "No more slave states; no more slave territory; resistance to pro-slavery aggression; slavery is sectional, liberty is national."

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.
[2] Ibid.

It was written, according to Medill's recollection, by himself, Rufus Spaulding, and John C. Vaughan.[1] A large public meeting was held later in Fremont, and the Ohio movement was launched, among the first, but not strictly the earliest, of the agitations for a Republican party. In claiming that the meeting in the Leader office was the first of its kind, Medill must have been ignorant of the one held at Ripon, Wisconsin, on February 28.

In Chicago, Medill and Ray, and later John L. Scripps, who was an especially able man, made the Tribune a powerful Republican organ. Illinois Republicans had held their first convention October 4, 1854: the rapid increase of the Tribune's circulation the next year was probably one of the indications of the party's growth. Dr. Ray represented the Tribune at a convention of "Anti-Nebraska" editors at Decatur on February 22, 1856, serving as chairman of the committee on resolutions.[2] This acted as a regular Republican convention, so great was the importance of the "editor-politician" in those days. At the state convention, which they called to meet at Bloomington on May 29, Medill was present as a delegate, and also as reporter for his paper. It was here that Lincoln made his famous "lost" speech, when he carried every one away so that the newspaper men forgot to take down his words. In McClure's Magazine for September, 1896, Medill describes the convention and Lincoln's fiery words denouncing slavery, "My belief is", he says, "that after

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.

[2] Ibid., June 10, 1897.

Mr. Lincoln cooled down, he was rather pleased that his speech had not been reported, as it was too radical in expression on the slave question for the digestion of central and southern Illinois at that time, and that he preferred to let it stand as a remembrance in the minds of his audience. But be that as it may, the effect of it on his hearers was such that he bounded to the leadership of the new Republican party of Illinois and no man afterwards ever thought of disputing that position with him. On that occasion he planted the seed which germinated into a Presidential candidacy and gave him the nominatipn over Seward at the Chicago convention of 1860."[1] In this presidential campaign of 1856 the Republican party made its first appearance as a national body, with John C. Fremont as its candidate. That Medill supported him is an evidence of his party loyalty, for Fremont had no chance of winning.

A description of Medill at this time is given by Clark E. Carr of Galesburg, "I first saw Mr. Medill when he came here as a representative of the Illinois State Republican Committee, about 1858. I sat by in the hotel and heard him argue against permitting slavery to extend any farther west. I did not then know him, but was surprised at the information he had. I remember that he declared that there were more sawmills in Kansas, then still a territory, but without slavery, than in any Southern slave

---

[1]Medill, Joseph, Lincoln's Lost Speech: The Circumstances and Effect of its Delivery. McClure's Magazine, VII: 319, 20.

state."[1]

The energies of the new party in Illinois next centered upon the Senatorship fight in 1858, supporting Lincoln against Douglas. Horace White was the official reporter of the famous debates for the Press and Tribune,[2] but Medill was present at some of them. The Chicago Sunday Tribune of May 9, 1895, contains a "Reminiscence of Lincoln" by him, in which he tells of travelling in the same train with Lincoln after the Ottawa debate on the way to Freeport. Lincoln called Medill over to sit with him and asked his advice on some questions which he intended putting to Douglas. Medill told him that he disapproved of one of them, which related to the power of territories to exclude slavery, because it would offer a loop-hole for Douglas on the slavery question. Lincoln was determined to use it, however. Upon arriving at Freeport, Medill says, "I found at the hotel the Republican member of Congress from that district, E. B. Washburne, with whom I was intimately acquainted, and Norman B. Judd, of Chicago, who was chairman of the Republican State Central Committee." He explained the matter to them, and they, too, tried to persuade Lincoln to drop the question, but to no avail. In the debate Douglas answered with his doctrine of squatter sovereignty; the legislature might decide adversely, because local legislation would settle whether or not slavery was to be maintained, he said, dodging the Dred Scott decision.

---

[1]Letter to author from Clark E. Carr, April 17, 1916.
[2]Sparks, Edwin E., The Lincoln-Douglas Debates; p. 75.

This was the point in the debate which made him intensely popular with the people of Illinois, but alienated the southern Democrats from him later, when he had presidential aspirations.

Mr. Medill's article goes on, "Two or three days after the election of 1860, when I learned that the active workers of the Republican party in the state were calling on Mr. Lincoln in Springfield to congratulate him on his triumphant election to the presidency, I concluded to make the same pilgrimage, and went down in the Alton cars with a number of other Chicagoans, reaching there in the morning. After breakfast I walked up to the old State House in the public square of that city where Mr. Lincoln was holding his levee in the office of the Secretary of State. He bent his head down to my ear and said in low tones something like this, 'Do you recollect the argument we had on the way up to Freeport two years ago over the question that I was going to ask Judge Douglas about the power of squatters to exclude slavery from the territories?' And I replied that I recollected it very well. 'Now,' said he, 'don't you think that I was right in putting that question to him?' I said, 'Yes, Mr. Lincoln, you were, and we were both right. Douglas' reply to that question undoubtedly hurt him badly for the presidency, but it re-elected him to the Senate at that time as I feared it would.'

"Lincoln then gave me a broad smile and said, 'Now I have the place that he was playing for.' We both laughed and the matter was never again referred to."

After the debates Medill wrote of Douglas to Schuyler Colfax, the Indiana editor, "My opinion is that he will never be reinstated in the Democratic Church, and that he will gradually drift towards our side and finally be compelled to act with us in 1860."[1] And when Colfax approached Medill later on the subject of bringing Douglas if possible to the Republican position, Medill, though a Lincoln man, admitted that this might make him an acceptable candidate for the presidency.[2] It was not to come about, however.

In 1859 Medill wrote Colfax on the candidacy of Edward Bates of Missouri. "Mr. Bates is a very nice man, but he has not said, and dare not say to the world that the Constitution recognizes no property in man, that the common law recognizes none, and that the general government must recognize none. That's our position. Whenever we fall below it we sink into the quicksands and will soon disappear. Let us be beaten with a representative man rather than triumph with a 'Union-saver'." Medill was known at this time as one of the "more radical" Republicans.[3]

The conviction grew that Lincoln must be the national candidate of his party. "A concerted plan was laid out by the Republican State Committee in the office of the Chicago Press and Tribune. The country Republican papers were to propose Mr. Lincoln's name for the presidential nomination, which was

---

[1]Hollister, O.J., Life of Schuyler Colfax; p. 124.
[2]Ibid., p. 123.
[3]Ibid., p. 147.

done. Early in 1860 the Press and Tribune came out for Lincoln."[1]

Medill's opinion of Seward's candidacy was expressed by him in a letter to the historian Frederic Bancroft, February 18, 1896. "I had become acquainted with him when I lived in Ohio, as early as 1848, and corresponded frequently with him. In some respects he was my political mentor and beau ideal of a statesman..... I spent the winter of 1859-60 in Washington and saw him there several times but never promised or told him that I would urge or favor his nomination for President in 1860." Medill believed Seward could not carry Illinois, Indiana, or Pennsylvania, he says, for he thought him too radical on the slavery question for the conservative Whigs of those states; he believed that Lincoln could carry them. His editorials to the Tribune declaring that Lincoln could be elected and not Seward, angered the latter, and he expressed himself forcibly to Medill, asserting that the considered that he has been the chief teacher of the principles of the Republican party before Lincoln was known and was the logical candidate.[2] Medill, however, never supported him.

Medill served as the Washington correspondent of his paper during the winters of 1859-60 and 1860-61, his long letters appearing almost daily over the signature "Chicago". This

---

[1]Currey, v. 2, p. 51.
[2]Bancroft, Frederic; Life of Seward; v.1, p. 530 n.

of course, brought him into intimate touch with the proceedings of Congress and the national leaders. He was by no means one to mince matters in expressing his opinion of what was going on; Democrats and Secessionists were one in his eye. December 21, 1859, he writes, "Every succeeding day develops the depth and breadth of the disunion sentiment among those known as Democrats. Disunion and Democracy have become convertible terms. Treason is rampant in the ranks of the party, and, what is astonishing, no northern Democrat has got up in his place and rebuked the traitors, or said a word against the Disunionists. On the contrary, we have had three set speeches from Northern Representatives in the House and one in the Senate, and each of them breathed the most dastardly sentiments. It is hard saying who made the meanest speech -- Logan, Cox, or Vallandingham." On the following January 10 he says, "Senator Seward made his appearance in the Senate chamber yesterday. He was cordially welcomed by the Republicans and Americans; but it was observed that only two or three of the Disunionists shook hands with him. The slight did not seem to affect his composure very seriously. I think he will survive the neglect.

"Douglas made his first appearance on the Senate floor at the same time that Seward did. He was coldly received. There were few to do him reverence. Half a dozen Democratic leaders stepped up to him and offered him their hands.... It was a chilling reception to a once powerful leader, and particularly one who dreams of being the Democratic candidate for the

presidency a few months hence."

And again, "One thing is becoming apparent in all the recent Southern speeches, viz., that the Douglas Democrats are as odious in the eyes of the South as the Republicans; that Popular Sovereignty is denounced with as much bitterness as the Jefferson Proviso, and that the rights of the people of the territories to legislate against slavery are denied as emphatically and peremptorily as the Republican opinion of the right of Congress to exclude slavery from them. It will not be many months until the fire-eaters will openly declare that the election of Douglas to the presidency will furnish good cause for dissolving the Union."[1]

He spent some time "preaching Lincoln among the Congressmen."[2] In February, 1860, he says, "Letters received here from various districts of Ohio say that Lincoln is the second choice of the Republicans of that state, and the first choice of at least one-third of the districts, and if nominated for President can carry it against any pro-slavery candidate by 30,000 majority."[3]

In the spring of 1859 the Press and Tribune roundly scored the New York Tribune for the omission of Lincoln's name from a list of Republicans who replied to an invitation to attend a Jefferson birthday celebration in Boston, as "a part and parcel of the policy which the Tribune has pursued towards one

---

[1]Chicago Press and Tribune, January 17, 1860.
[2]Tarbell, Ida M., Life of Abraham Lincoln; v.2, p. 133.
[3]Chicago Press and Tribune, February 27, 1860.

of the ablest and purest Republicans in the Union since he dared oppose the nominee of that sheet for United States Senator from Illinois."[1] The spirit with which the paper entered upon the campaign is shown by such notices as this, "By the rapidity with which our subscription list is increasing, it is plain that the Republican hosts are marshalling for a glorious victory in the year of grace 1860.... In living energy we mean to make every issue of the Press and Tribune a thorough and complete Republican document,"[2] It proposed this brief platform for the Republican convention, "Resolved, That we pledge ourselves to support the Constitution and laws of the United States and to use all constitutional and legal means to prevent the extension of Human Slavery into the territories now free."[3] And always it kept harping on the theme that Lincoln was the man to carry out such a platform. In the nominating convention that May Medill was present. The story is told in the New York Tribune of 1899 that during the balloting he was sitting with the Ohio delegation. "As the vote began Mr. Medill whispered to Delegate Carter, of Ohio. "Now is your time. If you can throw the Ohio vote to Lincoln, Chase can have anything he wants.

"'H-how d-d' you know?' stuttered Carter.

"'I know,' said Mr. Medill, 'and you know I wouldn't promise if I didn't know.'

"Carter got up and announced eighteen or nineteen votes

---

[1] Chicago Press and Tribune, April 28, 1859.
[2] Ibid., January 5, 1860.
[3] Ibid., May 2, 1860.

for Lincoln, and from that moment his nomination was a certainty."[1]

The winter after Lincoln's election Medill was again in Washington, writing as vigorously as ever. In fact, his dauntless pen probably got him into difficulties more than once. The incident which the New York Tribune of February 19, 1861, records concerning him was more than likely not the only one of its kind: "Mr. Kellogg of Illinois attacked tonight, in Washington, at the National Hotel, the Associate editor of the Chicago Tribune, who, as a correspondent of that paper from here, has severely reflected upon the political course of the former. There was not much of a fight, as parties interfered to prevent very bloody consequences."[2]

His comments at this critical time are interesting. He advises against compromise. "By the use of the word Compromise the free-labor interest lost the state of Missouri. The slave-holders claimed it. The free-laborers scouted the claim and repelled it indignantly.... A Union-Saving Committee was appointed who hatched up a 'Compromise' which consisted of

---

[1]New York Tribune, March 27, 1899. According to the account of the convention given by Ida M. Tarbell, it was the vote of Pennsylvania, not Ohio, which turned the tide. But the "Political Text-book for 1860" by Horace Greeley, published in that year, supports this story. On page 28 it says that the third ballot gave Lincoln 231 1/2 votes out of the total of 465, or within 2 1/2 of nomination. Before the result was announced, however, Mr. Carter of Ohio rose to announce the change of four Ohio votes from Chase to Lincoln, giving the latter his majority. Thus, although the vote of the Ohio delegation in its first form may not have been decisive, still, in the end it saved the day.

[2]New York Tribune, February 19, 1861.

surrendering to the slave-holders the very territory in dispute. The free-labor masses were swindled out of their just rights and basely betrayed by a portion of their own representatives who ratified the fraud. But the rascality had been christened by the pleasing name of compromise, and people swallowed the sugar-coated pill."[1]

In February he writes in an apprehensive strain of the dangers which the Union is facing. The conspiracy against it overspreads the North as well as the South, for in the hope of obtaining an advantage over the Republicans the Northern Democrats have taken sides with the rebels. The deadliest blow which has yet struck the Union is that delivered by the Democratic party in the free states, he declares.[2]

After the worries over Lincoln's inauguration had passed Medill took his leave of Washington. In his valedictory letter he tells how he was plagued by office-seeking "friends" for assistance. "They were from half the states of the Union. I was hardly out of bed in the morning until cards were sent in to my room or knocks heard at my door. I was followed to the breakfast and dinner and tea tables and sat up with until midnight. When I traversed Pennsylvania Avenue it was necessary to walk fast, with my hat pulled down over my eyes, to escape recognition..... They would grasp me affectionately by the hand and say, 'How are you? I'm so glad to see you.... You recol-

---

[1]Chicago Tribune, December 17, 1860.
[2]Chicago Tribune, February 8, 1861.

lect me don't you? I knew you in Ohio, when you edited the Leader; I have taken the Chicago Tribune for years; I have read your Washington letters and admire (?) them.' Then they would divulge their desire for office. I would mildly suggest to my 'friends' that nothing I could do would be of any service to them. They would generally reply, 'Oh, you are mistaken if you think so. Everybody knows that it was your paper that first brought out Old Abe for president and did more to give him notoriety and make him a national reputation than any other agency;" and so forth. He goes on to speak of the burden which this office-seeking was to the President, striking the note of civil service reform. "The patronage in the gift and at the disposal of the President is altogether too large. It has become one of the chief causes of corruption and is rapidly demoralizing the public mind, tempting tens of thousands to set their affections on office and making them believe it to be the short cut to ease, opulence, and renown.... The standard of official morality has become frightfully low." And in closing the letter he takes occasion to assume for himself considerable credit for his efforts on behalf of Lincoln's nomination, "I have undiminished faith that Lincoln will realize the reasonable expectations of the people. The writer of these rough notes, fifteen months ago, was the first man in Washington to raise voice or pen for Old Abe for president. At that time Seward, Bates and Cameron were the men from whom the Republican selection was to be made. 'Chicago' added a fourth name to the list, and entered Abraham Lincoln on the

course for nomination. His editorial associates at home promptly seconded the motion, and the Tribune boldly threw its weight into the Lincoln scales."[1]

---

[1]Chicago Tribune, March 16, 1861.

CHAPTER III. MEDILL AND POLITICS.

1861 - 1873

Throughout his life Medill displayed always a great fondness for politics, and at the same time a marked sagacity in directing his own course. He continually emphasized his allegiance to the Republican party, but he was not at all afraid of taking an independent stand when he so desired, and when he felt that his constitutency would back him. He was usually conservative; he carefully watched the course of public sentiment and was for the most part able to foresee fairly accurately the turns which it would take. He once said, "My experience, after many years in following the tide of politics, is that when a chief undertakes to do what the majority of the people believe to be wrong, he only hurts himself."[1] He always endeavored to base his judgments upon facts:[2] his opinions had the air of being reliable. He made numerous mistakes, of course, but on the whole he kept the confidence of the public. This is the sort of reputation which he was building up during his years in a subordinate position on the Tribune staff, and which became more clearly defined when he was editor-in-chief.

During the Civil War the Tribune on the whole approved the financial policy of the administration; it urged emancipation, carried on a little warfare of its own with the Copperhead Times, and in general expressed its contempt of disloyalists

---

[1] New York Tribune, May 23, 1881.
[2] Oral statement to author by Fred Hall.

vigorously -- all of which Medill was in sympathy with. Of the revenue laws it said, "The income tax, the tax on real estate -- twenty millions distributed among the states -- and the excise bill taxing alcoholic vinous and malt liquors at the places where they are manufactured -- all measures of necessity to which all patriotic men will readily assent -- with the modifications by which the duties on sugar, tea and coffee are considerably increased, will, it is thought, yield a revenue of more than one hundred millions of dollars, by which the ordinary expenses of the government may be kept up and the interest on the rapidly accumulating war debt promptly discharged. Congress has done well."[1] This was written in 1861, when it was expected that the war would soon be over, and that financial matters would be more simple than they proved to be. As early as October 11 of the same year the paper was pointing to the need for emancipation, "In any view we take we arrive at the same conclusion, and that is, that loyalty and patriotism demand an unanimous public opinion in favor of such military action as will ensure the most speedy overthrow of this wicked rebellion, and that action is embraced in one word -- Emancipation -- if not emancipation by act of Congress or the proclamation of the President, then emancipation as a military necessity. If not the emancipation of all slaves, those at least of rebel masters, remembering all the while that loyal slave-holders who observe the obligations of the Constitution have claims that other loyal

---

[1]Press and Tribune, August 6, 1861.

men can not afford to disregard." And again, in 1862, "We pity the man afflicted with a mind capable of believing that there can be a return of peace and security before slavery in Secessia be destroyed. The conviction of loyal men is that slavery caused the war; this conviction daily gains ground, after the war it will become still stronger; therefore, the restoration of the curse will prevent the restoration of confidence.... Northern pro-slavery Democrats are imbued with the infatuation that this war will produce no moral effects. It originated, they say, without any definite cause; and they oppose any definite policy in its management..... But our government, even if it were so resolved, can no more resume its past relations to slavery than a full-grown man can again become a boy."[1] This phrasing smacks strongly of Medill.

The Chicago ~~Tribune~~ Times, under Wilbur F. Story, openly took the side of the South. It was suppressed, June 2 and 4, 1863, by order of General Burnside. There was considerable feeling against the paper, but still the people considered this action an unwarranted violation of the freedom of the press.[2] The Tribune and the Times were of course bitter enemies; the former speaks of "Union men of the Chicago Times stripe, Union men so long as they do not preach secession,"[3] and says, "But few loyal men in this city or in the adjacent country ever take into their hands the organ of Jefferson Davis in this city, the Chicago Times." The Tribune goes on to quote from its rival

---

[1]Chicago Tribune, April 15, 1862.
[2]Ibid., February 24, 1862.
[3]Currey, History of Chicago, v.2, p. 125.

a paragraph which is, to be sure, a trifle strong in its statements, "The country should know, it must know, that this war, as it is now conducted, is a war of revenge and fanaticism,-- a war against the Constitution and laws -- a reproach upon the patriots who framed the Constitution and government, controlled by an administration and Congress who are the disciples of those who have persistently imprecated the Constitution and prayed for its subversion. Such being its character, the Democratic party in the loyal states is against its further prosecution."[1]

The attitude of the Tribune towards the South, is expressed in rather strong terms in the issue of April 2, 1863, when it comments on, "the depth of the hate, the loftiness of the pride, and the completeness of the malignity by which the South is animated, and the cowardice and fatuity of those who believe, or affect to believe, that there is any possible settlement of the national difficulties, any way of making an honorable and enduring peace, except through conquest so complete that the whole surface and texture of southern society and industry shall be changed. It is a mournful fact that the way to national unity and prosperity lies through blood. To push on the columns, and to burn, kill and destroy, is the last terrible resource of mercy."

Letters which Medill wrote to Schuyler Colfax during the dark days of defeat show how great the strain was. After the failure of the peninsular campaign, he says, "The Union

---

[1]Chicago Tribune, January 28, 1863.

is in awful peril. We have fought for 'Union and Slavery' for sixteen months. The crisis has come at last. One or the other must be given up, both cannot endure. We, as a nation, have rowed against Niagara's stream, but have drifted steadily towards the chasm, and the roar of the cataract can be heard by all but the wilfully deaf."[1] And not long after, "What a dismal retrospect is the past eighteen months. That period consists of epaulettes and apathy, imbecility and treachery, idiocy and ignorance, sacrifice on the part of the people, supineness on the part of the Government. McClellan in the field and Seward in the Cabinet have been the evil spirits that have brought our grand cause to the very brink of death. Seward must be got out of the Cabinet. He is Lincoln's evil genius. He has been President de facto and has kept a sponge saturated with chloroform to Uncle Abe's nose all the while, except one or two brief spells, during which rational intervals, Lincoln removed Buell, issued the Emancipation Proclamation, and discharged McClellan. Smith is a cipher on the right hand of the Seward integer -- by himself nothing but a doughface. Bates is a fossil of the Silurian era--red sandstone at least--and should never have been quarried out of the rock in which he was imbedded. Blair was thrown into a retrograde position by the quarrel of his brother Frank with Fremont. There must be a reorganization of the Cabinet; Seward, Smith and Bates must go out."[2]

The Tribune's loyalty to Lincoln showed itself on one occasion in the following unique proposal, one which Medill would

---

[1]Hollister, Life of Colfax, p. 186.
[2]Hollister, Life of Colfax, p. 203.

have been quite capable of making, "And now if the President, who is the best military man in or about Washington, will only draw his sword and put himself at the head of that Potomac army, we may get a victory in Virginia that will end the war in six months. We devoutly believe that he has more horse sense than any of his subordinates in the eastern army, and that, having steadily, and under the spur of a great necessity applied himself to the study of military affairs, particularly to the necessities of the country around the Capital, he is fully competent to assume in person the active duties of his high place as commander-in-chief."[1]

Medill and the Tribune did a great deal of solid work on behalf of Lincoln, especially in the campaign of 1864 for his re-election, when Medill was editor-in-chief. December 17, 1863, he wrote, "I presume it is true that Mr. Chase's friends are working for his nomination, but it is all labor lost. Old Abe has the inside track so completely that he will be nominated by acclamation when the convention meets.... The people will say to Chase, 'You stick to finance, and be content until after 1868,' and to Grant, 'Give the rebels no rest; put them through; your reward will come in due time; but Uncle Abe must be allowed to boss the reconstruction of the Union.'"[2] Ingersoll, in his Life of Greeley, has said that the friends of Lincoln were "sustained by an immense, omnipresent outside pressure, and powerfully strengthened by the Chicago Tribune, then and since one of the

---

[1]Chicago Tribune, May 28, 1863.
[2]Nicolay and Hay, Lincoln, v. 8, p. 323.

strongest journals of the republic."[1] During the campaign the Tribune printed often the following ditty from the New York Independent, as expressing its sentiments:

"Our President, 1864.

"Abraham Lincoln knows the ropes;
All our hopes
Center now about the brave and true.
Let us help him as we can;
He's the man,
Honest for the country through and through." &c.&c.[2]

Medill also helped the Union cause indirectly at this point by urging the legislature to pass laws allowing the soldiers in service to vote.

In an interview with Ida M. Tarbell in 1895 Medill told of an incident in connection with the call for extra troops from Chicago in 1864 when he was not proud of the part which he played. The city rebelled at the thought of sending more men -- 22,000 had already gone -- and appointed a committee of three, including Medill, to go to Washington and plead with Stanton. The Secretary of War would do nothing for them, and so they appealed to President Lincoln. He sat gravely silent at first, and then burst forth with bitter words, saying that they should be ashamed of themselves. He told Medill he was acting like a coward. He said that

---

[1] Ingersoll's Life of Greeley, p. 339.
[2] Chicago Tribune, June 13, 1864.

the northwest had been as bad as New England in bringing on the war, and that the Tribune had had more influence than any other paper in the north-west in making it. "You can influence great masses, and yet you cry to be spared at a moment when your cause is suffering. Go home and send us those men."[1]

After the war, Medill upheld Congressional reconstruction and negro suffrage. "Freedman suffrage is the living issue between the Republican and Copperhead party, and instead of, like Peter, denying his Christ, the Times (N.Y.) would do well to preach the gospel of universal suffrage to every creature."[2] He declares that while the Republicans are anxious that the legislatures of the reconstructing states should pass the Constitutional amendment against slavery, still that they are not now "states" and consequently their vote has no validity.[3] The biographer of Thaddeus Stevens refers to him at this time, "Stevens' declarations on southern questions were the declarations of his party majority, shared by his colleagues and constituents in the north, enunciated by such men as Carl Schurz, Lowell, Medill, and other leaders of Northern public opinion at the time.[4]

Under Horace White's editorship, Medill's political activities, as we have seen, brought him election as member of the State Constitutional Convention of 1869, to represent Cook County, together with John C. Haines and Snowden S. Hayes.[5] He seems

---

[1]Tarbell, Life of Lincoln, pp. 148-9.
[2]Chicago Tribune, November 2, 1865.
[3]Ibid., December 7, 1865.
[4]Woodburn, Life of Thaddeus Stevens, p. 484.
[5]Journal of Constitutional Convention, 1869-70, p. 5.

to have been in every way a leading member of the convention, even aside from the fact that his minority representation plan proved to be one of the most important features of the whole proceedings. At the opening of the convention, December 15, he was one of four unanimously granted the privilege of choosing their seats before the rest drew for places. He was nominated for the presidency of the gathering, and lost only by a vote of forty-five to forty.[1] He was chairman of the committee on the Grand Divisions of the Superior Court, member of the Committees on Schedule and on Printing and Binding, and chairman of that on Electoral and Representative Reform. In this last capacity he presented February 10, 1870, a report outlining a plan to apportion the state into three-member districts and to give each voter as many votes as there were senators or representatives to be chosen, with the privilege of distributing them among the candidates or concentrating them on one, as he wished. The report explained the system in detail, and enlarged upon its advantages. "The theory of our representative government seems perfect and satisfactory, but in practice there is a wide departure from the doctrine of the Declaration of Independence, which affirms that 'governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.' In the selection of the agents to frame the laws, only one part of the people are permitted to be represented. True, they may all vote for the choice of representatives, but only those persons receiving the highest number of votes may serve in a representative capacity..... In the

---

[1]Journal of Constitutional Convention, 1869-70, p. 12.

primary assemblages, all parties and opinions are represented. The minority stand on an equal footing with the majority, and possesses equal power, man for man. Why is not this democratic principle retained in the representative assembly?.... How can a law be morally binding on those citizens who have been denied the right to help frame it?.... Is not this tyranny rather than democracy -- the tyranny of an arbitrary majority imposing its will on the forcibly excluded minority?" The plan of leaving the voter unrestricted in the distribution of his votes among the candidates has been accepted by John Stuart Mill and other thinkers; Medill considers that it will preserve the rule of the majority, while allowing the minority a voice on questions which affect their interests. "The adoption of this reform will do much towards abating the baneful spirit of partisan animosity... It will also tend powerfully to relieve the voter from the despotism of party caucuses, and at the same time constrain party leaders to exercise more care in selecting candidates for lawmakers. There is nothing which will more effectually put an end to the packing of conventions than the arming of the voter with this three-shooter or triple ballot power, whereby he may fire 'plumpers' for the candidates of his choice and against those of his aversion." The report shows a considerable knowledge of the status which minority representation held with political scientists in the various countries of Europe, and in America, closing with a bouquet for Illinois when it says that the scheme is widely approved throughout the state, "and <u>what Illinois thinks today the</u>

Union will think tomorrow."[1]

Whether Medill really believed that all the great benefits which he described would actually result from the system, we can not say. But we know that his primary purpose in introducing the proposition was to remedy situation in the state by which southern Illinois (Democratic) was in the preponderance over the Republican northern Illinois. In 1862 the Tribune had opposed the work of the constitutional convention of that year as "disfranchising the northern part of the state."[2] Medill's own neighborhood was with him, therefore, -- a "Minority Representation Society" had been formed in Chicago for propaganda.[3] But, although the proposition carried, there was, as one might expect, opposition "down-state". The Springfield correspondent of the Rushville Times said that "the deaf and immaculate Medill" and the other Cook County delegtes came down with the idea that they were going to show Illinois it was in Chicago.[4] December 15, 1869, the Union and Gazette of Champaign-Urbana, voiced its sentiments to this effect, under the heading "Medill's Fallacy", "We stated in a previous issue that the most recent and most prominent advocate of Minority Representation was Mr. Joseph Medill, of the Chicago Tribune. We might also state he is the only man of prominence advocating the delusive measure; but, un-

---

[1]Journal of Constitutional Convention, 1869-70, pp. 408-12.
[2]Chicago Tribune, April 15, 1862.
[3]Journal of Constitutional Convention, p. 427.
[4]Rushville Times, April 19, 1870.

doubtedly, the fact is patent to all.....

"Verily, it seemeth to us, that Medill's Fallacy would be an upsetting of laws and customs long established, would engender confounding confusion, and would be unable to work a single reform or confer a solitary benefit. For advocating such a fraud, Lucifer was hurled headlong from the battlements of heaven, a big per cent of the Confederate cohorts banished to hell, and Joe Medill, unless he pleads insanity, deserves to be taken by the nap of the neck and seat of the breeches and thrown head-over-heels into the muck of the party he is so desirous of helping into power." And, later in 1870, "It is our sincere belief that the new constitution, now before the people of the state for their approval, is much superior to the old one, and in no respect is it worse. We think the constitution proper, the main instrument, is good enough to adopt, but we deem many of the 'separate articles' tacked on by way of gratification to some of the hobby-riders who managed to creep into the convention, as worthy of emphatic rejection.

"Of these, none are more worthy of the condemnation of the people than the minority representation plan of the hair-brained Medill."[1]

Medill was a constant supporter of the Civil Service Reform movement which began to be prominent under Grant, though it did not result in legislation until the eighties. We have already noted that he condemed the faults of the spoils system

---

[1]Union and Gazette, June 15, 1870.

at the beginning of Lincoln's administration in 1861. His service on the commission which President Grant appointed in 1871 was not of importance -- the time was not ripe for action. But his influence was on the side of the movement during the years that followed, as this extract from the Tribune of 1881 shows. "Change the heads (of departments), but let the subordinates alone, if they are expert and faithful, is the golden mean that should be adopted in the Civil Service, and let their permanence depend upon their honesty and capacity."[1]

In the Republican State Convention of 1870, Medill was a candidate against Charles B. Farwell for the nomination for Congressman, and lost by twenty votes.[2]

We shall not be able here to go into the details of Medill's administration as mayor of Chicago, the one important experience in public office-ho lding of his life, and one full of difficulties for him. The Council had rescinded $1,442,790 of the taxes of 1872 on account of the fire, depriving the administration of one-half of its income. The new state Supreme Court had decided several cases over the payment of special assessments unfavorably to the city, cases involving the sum of $790,164.[3] Says the Tribune, "The great majority of the people of Chicago were not prepared for the announcement by Mayor Medill in his inaugural that for several years there has been accumulating a city debt of which no mention was made in official documents, and which never

---

[1]Chicago Tribune, January 15, 1881.
[2]Bennett, F. O., Politics and Politicians of Chicago p. 135.
[3]Moses and Kirkland, p. 216.

appeared in official or unofficial statements of the public liabilities.... These debts or claims arise under our special assessment system. It has been demonstrated that our officers charged with the duty have not succeeded, during the last ten years, in making a special assessment that would stand the test of judicial scrutiny. They have all been so defective from one cause or another, that, whenever any person appealed from them, he was sure to escape taxation. The Supreme Court has given the climax to this situation by a decision that no re-assessment can be made to reach the property thus escaping taxation, and that the error can only be remedied by proceedings de novo. The portion of the tax thus declared illegally assessed has been lost...."[1]

Moreover, the treasurer, David A. Gage, who was elected on the ticket with Medill to serve a second term, was retained in office, it was charged, by an inner ring which was trying to cover up frauds in the treasury; it later became known that he had defaulted to the amount of $503,703. In addition to all this, there was the loss suffered through the destruction of the City Hall, fire and police stations, water-works, and other public buildings to be met.[2]

Medill felt that under the existing laws the Mayor's powers were not sufficient to cope with the situation, and went into office with the hope of having them extended by the legislature.[3] General sentiment supported him. "By what elective and

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, February 16, 1872.
[2] Bennett, F. O., pp. 137-8.
[3] Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.

democratic system can a large city be honestly and economically governed?" asked the Tribune. ".... In Chicago the feeling in favor of concentration of power and responsibility in the executive head of the city is pretty unanimous, and has really little else to overcome than the vis inertiae of legislative bodies. Whether any system can be devised whereby the tax-payers shall have an equal practical representation with the tax thieves in the City Council, will be a subject for future consideration."[1] Medill was in favor of framing a new charter for the city,[2] but had to be content with the passage of the "Mayor's Bill", which gave the Mayor and Council increased control of the boards of administration[3] and granted the executive the power of vetoing individual items in an appropriation bill.[4] The state also helped by assuming the city's canal debt, of $2,055,340. But according to the constitution the city could not borrow beyond the amount of the annual tax levy; during 1872-3 the Council had to resort frequently to the issuance of "scrip", which it later redeemed.[5] Mayor Medill insisted upon economy in expenditures, and various minor reforms, in which he was supported by the Council.[6] Under his administration the Chicago Public Library was founded, and he set the example of appointing a non-partisan library board.[7]

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, February 16, 1872.
[2] Chicago Historical Society Collection: A. H. Burley Collection of Autograph Letters, v. 5, no. 60, Medill to Burley, Dec.1,1871.
[3] Chicago Tribune, March 17, 1899.
[4] Ibid., June 15, 1881.
[5] Bennett, F. O., pp. 138-9.
[6] Moses and Kirkland, p. 216.
[7] Kirkland, Joseph and Caroline, Story of Chicago, p. 255. Hurd and Sheppard, Hist. Encyc. Ill., v.1, p. 368.

The general disorder after the fire was accompanied by lawlessness and crime. Some Chicagoans declared that the source of the trouble was the general prevalence of drunkenness, and began urging upon Medill the enforcement of the Sunday closing law. He at first opposed it as impracticable, but at length yielded to the importunities of the "Citizens' Committee of Fifteen", and thereby alienated the German Republicans. His board of police commissioners split over the issue. In the summer of 1873 the dissatisfaction grew; meetings were held, and the opposition consolidated into the "People's Party"[1], which elected H. D. Colvin mayor that fall on a platform of "personal liberty" and a "wide-open" Chicago.[2] One is led to conclude that Medill was in many ways too good for the office.

---

[1]Moses and Kirkland, pp. 216, 219.
Bennett, F. O., pp. 139, 140, 142.
[2]Cook, F.F., Bygone Days in Chicago, p. 264.

CHAPTER IV. MEDILL AND SOME POLITICAL ISSUES AFTER THE CIVIL WAR.

With the management of the Tribune by Horace White, Medill, as we have seen, was not, on the whole, in accord. His assumption, now, of the position of editor-in-chief once more, gave him the opportunity of dictating the policy of the paper for himself. He at once proceeded to bring it back into the strict Republican fold and restore the confidence of many party adherents who had been displeased by its support of Liberal Republicanism. Medill's "Prospectus", in the Tribune of November 20, 1874, styled the paper as "Independent Republican" and announced, "The Chicago Tribune, under the guidance of its former editor, has resumed its old position at the head of Republican journals, and will do battle in the future for the true principles of free government, and for a purified and honest administration of National, State, and municipal affairs.

"While giving to the Republican party a cordial and earnest support in all wise measures, and to all fit candidates, the Tribune will never be the organ of any individual faction or ism, nor will it cease to combat oppressive monopolies or fail to expose and denounce all corrupt schemes for plundering the Treasury or the people. It will wage perpetual war on lobby rings who prowl around the halls of legislation in quest of spoil.

"The recent elections, while inflicting temporary defeat on the Republican party, have done great good in sweeping away fanatical and side issues which embarrassed its freedom of action,

and in crushing out those baleful and corrupting influences known as 'Butlerisms', which poisoned the channels of the public life. Purified, as by fire, of the evil things which had infested its garments, the Republican party will enter upon the tremendous struggle of 1876 with renewed vigor for the possession of the government and the shaping of the policy of the nation when it enters upon the second century of its existence."[1]

The keynote thus struck, though given in rather exaggerated newspaper phraseology, was fairly consistently adhered to throughout Medill's editorship, as he took a stand upon one after another of the important questions of the day: the tariff, the silver question, national finance, prohibition, railroads and monopolies, education labor problems, woman suffrage, and the reform of judicial methods may be taken as examples. Let us review his position on each one of these issues.

His convictions on the matter of tariff policy he had expressed in letters to the Tribune over the signature "Protection," in January and February of 1865, and the Tribune after 1874 is full of evidences of the position which he took. He has been called a free-trader; a more accurate statement would seem to be that he advocated a moderate protective tariff. In 1866 he declared that free-trade meant no tariff at all. " 'tariff for revenue' is protection to whatever amount it imposes duties on foreign fabrics", excepting, of course, articles not produced here. "The present tariff is the best revenue tariff this country has ever had", he

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, January 20, 1874.

goes on. "It is producing at least three times as much revenue as the Democratic low tariff in force when the war began." Nothing else could have supplied the needed revenue but direct taxation, which would fall heaviest on the farmers, he declared.[1] Medill's interests were of course chiefly with the agricultural middle west. "We hold that this country has within itself the raw material in the shape of minerals, forests and agricultural products for almost averything needful to make life comfortable and the people prosperous and happy; and we also hold that all that is required to make the United States the commercial dictator of the world is, fair protection for a sufficient length of time to enable our various industries to take root, for capital to accumulate and labor to become skilled and experienced."[2]

In later years, the years of very high protective tariffs unjustified because of the necessity of war or the needs of "infant industries", Medill's plea was different, and he was frequently called an English Free-trader. Says the Chicago Inter-Ocean , "The policy which has governed England, and which Mr. Medill advocates, if adopted in American, would reduce the laboring classes of this country to the abject and impoverished condition in which the Irish laboring class now suffers at home. It would make paupers of our iron-workers and our agriculturists, our mechanics and our laborers, but would make the landlords and capitalists of Great Britain rich. America would be as Ireland is, the victim and the slave of British capital." This argument Medill refuted

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, January 11, 1866.
[2] Ibid., January 13, 1866.

by pointing out that the distress of the Irish has been owing to other causes, and that Scotland has not suffered, though submitting to the same free-trade policy.[1] But with regard to his own sentiments concerning free-trade at this time, he says, 1880, "It should always be borne in mind, in considering this question, that there are but few, if any, persons in the United States who favor or propose the adoption of 'free-trade' as it is understood and exists in England, as a part of the policy of this country. Free-trade, in the United States, means a tariff so adjusted as to rates and objects of taxation as will produce the greatest amount of revenue consistent with the lowest rate of taxation."[2]

And, also in the eighties, when the interests of the middle-west pointed in a different way from what they did in 1866, "It is a mistake for Congress to undertake the reduction of the internal taxes, which are easily borne, and every dollar of which goes into the treasury, while the exorbitant tariff dues, which take three dollars out of the people for every one dollar that goes into the treasury, are unrepealed."[3]

He constantly contended that the Democratic party was doing no more towards tariff reduction than were the Republicans. In 1882 we read, under the caption, "Free Trade Democracy", "The Democratic party is rapidly becoming a merely historical reminiscence ... At the last presidential election the candidate of the

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, January 11, 1883.
[2] Ibid., August 31, 1880.
[3] Ibid., June 26, 1882.

Democratic party, wearing the plumes of the chosen leader of a 'tariff for revenue only', ingloriously abandoned his cause and wheeled his Democratic forces into the Republican column.... When our manufacturers abandon that narrow policy and strike out for the trade of the world, then the protective tariff will be removed as an incumbrance to national as well as to manufacturing prosperity in this country."[1]

The Journal comes out with this: "If the presidential campaign of 1884 should be fought on the tariff question as the main issue -- the Republicans on the side of American industry, labor, and commerce, and the Democrats espousing British free-trade -- on which side will the Chicago Tribune be found? We 'rest for a reply'." Whereupon Mr. Medill: "The Journal supposes that the Democrats, in the platform of 1884 will adopt the British free-trade tariff for a model of theirs. Only a very far-gone crank would suppose anything of the kind."[2] And later, "On what issue do the Democrats ask control of the government?" The most important question remaining unsettled, he says, is that of tariff reform. How do they stand on that? The Kentucky Democratic convention failed to respond to Henry J. Wattersons appeals for it; it seems that no reduction is to be expected of the Democracy. "They will come before the people and cry out as usual, 'We are hungry for the offices! "[3] He makes no claims that the Republicans will reduce: all his emphasis is laid on the fact

---

[1]Chicago Tribune, May 12, 1882.
[2]Ibid., March 11, 1883.
[3]Ibid., June 1, 1883.

that the Democrats will not do so. "The bashfulness which the Democracy exhibits in their dealings with the tariff makes it evident that they will not arouse that slumbering issue," he declares in the fall of '83.[1] Again, of the Democratic House of that winter, "The Republicans havenothing to lose and everything to gain by the execution of this mandate of the National Democratic Committee, that there shall be no tariff legislation by the House. The initiative of tariff reduction is with the Democrats. The Republicans are not responsible for any failure to pass any reduction of taxes. Their part is the simple and easy one of waiting quietly, and when the canvass comes of referring to the reduction they made at the last session. That was a reduction far short of what the Republicans should have done, but it was something. The Republicans certainly reduced taxation at the last session when they had control of Congress, and they could ask no better luck then that the Democrats should do nothing whatever at this session."[2]

The failure of the Morrison tariff bill fulfilled his expectations as to the Democratic attitude. The platform of the Republican state convention at Peoria that spring he commends especially for its demand for reduction, particularly on the woolen schedules. "No bolder or clearer utterance in favor of a reduction of tariff taxation has been made than is contained in these clarion notes from the Republicans of Illinois."[3] He favored

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, October 19, 1883.
[2] Ibid., February 27, 1884.
[3] Ibid., April 18, 1884.

an absolutely unrestricted free-trade with Canada.[1] He criticizes the Mills Bill, but asks for its amendment rather than rejection.[2] His tariff sentiments through the first two administrations of the eighties differed somewhat, we see, from those which he had expressed in 1866.

And as, in the later years of the decade, it became clear that the Republicans were ranging themselves on the side of a high protective policy, as opposed to a Democratic stand for reduction, he was indeed obliged to "trim his sails". In 1888 he was refuting the contention that high tariff meant high wages.[3] Early in the following winter he faced the situation in this way, "Every turn of the tariff question makes it plainer that the Republican Congressmen favor high wages, even if that create high-priced goods, while the Democrats want cheap goods, no matter at what reduction in the wages paid to labor... Both parties show oscillations and perturbations at times, but the fundamental difference is clear -- the one is a party of high wages and maintained prices, and the other of low wages and cheap goods. City workmen generally, and employes in protected industries, at the last election inclined to the latter, while the farmers adhered to the former. Just why is hard to explain."[4] And in 1889 he was writing a series of articles to prove that a protective tariff kept wages high![5] His definition of a free-trader differs from that which

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, April 23, 1887, July 20, 1885, et al.
[2] Ibid., April 25, 1888.
[3] Ibid., February 27, 1888.
[4] Ibid., January 24, 1889.
[5] Ibid., October and November, 1889.

he gave in 1866; "In a practical sense a man is a free-trader when he opposes any tax which bars out unrestrained foreign competition, and demands the repeal of all duties which protect home industry, and will tolerate only those which operate merely to bring revenue into the treasury without giving labor or capital any protection, the object being to cut down prices to the English level."[1] To conform to the orthodox Republican doctrines on the subject went hard with him. He has been accused of favoring extreme reduction between elections and at campaign time coming around to strict party adherence. This is the reluctant fashion in which he endorsed the McKinley Bill to an interviewer, "I myself favored a modified tax. I would have increased the free list, and I don't believe I would have raised the tax on dutiable articles. I think the McKinley Bill was a mistake, but men wiser than I and more in the councils of our party decided that this measure must be passed."[2]

Another issue on which Medill's western sympathies probably had something to do with deciding his position was the currency question. That is, he stood for "hard money", and so for the coinage of silver, which came to be a western cry. He was never influenced by the earlier demand for paper inflation. The Tribune in 1861 thus defined its policy, a policy which seems to have been Medill's ad well as the Tribune's always: "If the people of Chicago and the north-west neglect the opportunity to secure for themselves a currency on a specie basis, they will bitterly rue the day that they were governed by their folly... There

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, November 17, 1889.
[2] New York Tribune, November 11, 1892.

is an almost entire suspension of business, but gold, forced into circulation by the necessities of those who hold it, will become more plentiful.... Our readers may conclude that the Tribune is for a specie basis. It is, and we see no way in which it may be attained by any tinkering up of lists in which bank bills worth ninety cents or eighty-seven cents are, by some new mathematical philosophy, made to represent a dollar."[1] "Throughout the present year all classes of citizens have been suffering losses -- some have been entirely ruined -- by reason of the crazy condition of the circulating medium. It is no answer to say that our particular system of paper currency was founded on wrong principles, because money can not be made of paper. All systems of paper currency that have ever been tried have failed at one time or another--are failing all the time and will always continue to fail."[2]

In 1864 the Tribune protests against the reckless expansion of banks' circulation and against the refusal of Congress to pass a prohibitive tax.[3] In February, 1866, Medill was printing all over the paper the notice, "Caution. Look out for Greenbacks!"

Even so, though, he was not enthusiastic over the prospect of a resumption of specie payments when it was set for 1879. An editorial of August 22, 1877, reads, "In the discussion of the Resumption law, which provides for the redemption of greenbacks on the first of January, 1879, we have endeavored to fairly point out that to enforce that law, as it now stands, would bring

---

[1]Chicago Press and Tribune, May 23, 1861.
[2]Chicago Tribune, November 23, 1861.
[3]Ibid., March 17, 1864.

all the business of the country to a calamitous suspension." It further declares that the operation of the law would compel the redemption and retirement of both the national bank and greenback currency, leaving the country with "a comparative handful of gold... In such an event there would be a general crash, an utter annihilation of credit and of business... The vast majority of Republicans between the Allegheny and Rocky Mountains are opposed to the law as impracticable and unsafe."

He approved of the scheme for an international agreement regarding the basis of the currency, hoping that the standard of bimetallism would be adopted.[1] In the eighties we find editorials on such topics as "The Failing Gold Supply",[2] and "The Consumption of Gold." "It is difficult to see how the country can stand the squeeze of monometallism much longer," he says. "Dear gold and cheap labor."[3] is a phrase he makes use of. In '85 he supports the proposal to issue legal tender silver certificates, "No argument has yet been offered to prove that such certificates could not be maintained at par in such manner as to meet the danger of a gold drain, and at the same time preserve silver money from abolition."[4] But during the next decade he was up loyally upholding the gold standard and opposing the silver agitation. "If the government of the United States did not redeem its silver dollars and the notes issued against them with gold this country years ago

---

[1]Chicago Tribune, March 10, 1881.
[2]Ibid., June 15, 1885.
[3]Ibid., November 11, 1885.
[4]Ibid., October 1, 1885.

would have tumbled down to the debased silver standard, at a loss to the people of billions of dollars."[1] And "No honest man believes that that standard (gold) is a bad thing, nor is he trying to get rid of it. The proposition to act in conjunction with other nations in an effort to elevate the depreciated silver, and hold it at the purchasing power of gold, is not a proposition to abandon the gold standard. It contemplates the continued maintenance of that standard."[2]

As early as 1865 the Tribune was noting the beginnings of farmers' agitation against the railroads.[2a] The discriminations in rates and tendencies towards monopoly received constant attention in its columns. By 1880 it was ready to declare itself in favor of government regulation through a commission.[3] An editorial reads, "The last touch will not be given to the solution of the railroad problem until the roads are taken under the care of the government, and competitive tariffs and competitive building both regulated. Our choice must be between that and universal bankruptcy preliminary to the consolidation of all the railroads into one corporation."[4] At the same time Medill was becoming interested in other manifestations of the beginning of "big business", and advocating and investigation of the Standard Oil Company.[5] Corporations he treats in this fashion, "Are Corporations

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, June 29, 1893.
[2] Ibid., July 23, 1896.
[2a] Ibid., December 11, 1865.
[3] Ibid., December 18, 1880.
[4] Ibid., June 30, 1884.
[5] Ibid., December 31, 1880.

Persons?" "Corporations were long since shown to have no souls, either legally, or as a matter of fact. But now that a great railroad corporation has come before the Supreme Court to insist that it shall be regarded as a person, and so entitled to the benefit of the fourteenth amendment, we may as well recognize that evolution applies to corporations as to other animals. The corporation is emerging into the upper ether of personality no doubt as a preliminary to rising to the higher altitudes of a soul."[1]

His attitude towards organized labor and its problems was eminently a conservative one. He had no patience with the Chicago Socialists, whom he denounced as "Communistic Cranks". "As these cranks have now adopted for their watchword increased pay or no work, let us see what that high-sounding phrase really means and what would be the results of such a policy!" going on to conclude, "It is a thousand pities there is not some method of incarcerating them in lunatic asylums long enough for their heads to cool sufficiently to enable them to take common-sense views of things."[2] In September of 1883 he testified before a Senate Committee on the Relations between Capital and Labor, giving characteristic expressions of his views. "I believe that the chief cause of the impecunious condition of the wage earners of this country is their own proudness and lack of thrift," he said. "Too many people are trying to get along without work. Those who do toil squander the greater part of their wages in drink and tobacco. On small wages

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, June 30, 1883.
[2] Ibid., October 29, 1881.

a man can still save something. The wisest thinker on social questions the United States has yet produced once said that 'a penny saved is a penny earned.' It was to the working classes that Dr. Franklin was speaking, and I must say that I have never known a workman, no matter what his earnings were, who, if he spent his money for smoke and drink, ever accumulated anything.... Drink, I affirm, is the progenitor of nearly all the ills to which the working men of the United States are subjected. No trades unions or other combinations can ever bring relief to them in the absence of temperance and economy. High License -- the higher the better -- will reduce the number of groggeries and the inclination on the part of the people to visit them. I have very little faith in political prohibition or schemes of that sort.

"The evil next to drink which destroys the lives of wage-workers is the existence of wretched tenement houses... Premature deaths among the laboring classes of this and other cities are due partly to the criminal neglect of public officials, and partly to the greedy avarice of grasping landlords.....

"It is a standard belief among trades unions that a reduction in the hours of labor would eventually prove a remedy for all the ills to which the laboring classes are now subjected. They seem to overlook the fact that, were this plan adopted, the country would soon be flooded with a horde of foreign artisans, and wages would, as a result, fall so low that it would become almost impossible to make a living. Education might be made to remove some of the difficulties, but not with our present systems.

The high schools and colleges do not teach a pupil how to double the value of his labor. They bring up hundreds and thousands of our youth to get their living by their wits. Every institution should teach practical studies, such studies as will be of use to the student in his after life."[1]

This criticism of the education of the day he expressed constantly in the Tribune. Early in 1882 he printed a series of articles pointing out the impossibility of a boy's learning a trade, owing to the decay of the apprentice system and the hostility of the unions. The trouble, he said, is general; "the best plan to meet it is undoubtedly the one which is soon to be put into operation in Chicago -- the establishment of manual training schools, where all the mechanical arts shall be taught."[2]

The opinion of Prohibition expressed before the committee is typical of his constant attitude towards it. He speaks of the party as "grossly exaggerating" in its characterization of the liquor trade.[3] He says, "It is certain that men have been drinking alcoholic liquor in one or the other of its forms since the human race began; it is equally certain that they will continue to drink it till the end."[4] He "played safe", taking neither extreme, when reforms were being agitated: witness his utterance on woman suffrage. In the light of the 1913 law of the Illinois legislature, granting the partial franchise to women, it is interesting to hear his views on the possibility of such a course in 1881. "There is but one way in which these

---

[1] New York Tribune, September 27, 1883.
[2] Chicago Tribune, July 25, 1882.
[3] Ibid., September 15, 1882.
[4] Ibid., May 25, 1884.

women can gain the right of voting in this state, and that is to have the legislature submit an amendment to the constitution of the state striking out the word 'male' from the seventh article, to be voted on (as other amendments are voted on) by the general voters of the state. The attempt to amend the constitution by an act of the legislature may be sufficient to tickle the credulous female agitators who ask it, but it is an insult to the intelligence of the whole sex."[1]

He seems, thus, to have stood, generally, for moderate reforms and changes which the country appeared ready for. He kept insisting on civil service reform, control of railways, improvement of judicial methods, and the like questions, many of which were on the point of being dealt with by the public. There was seldom anything sensational in his policy.

---

[1]Chicago Tribune, February 2, 1881.

CHAPTER V. MEDILL IN HIS CONNECTION WITH PARTIES AND PARTY MEN AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

Medill's participation in politics as an editor brought him into prominence, not only on the various issues of the time, but also in connection with numerous personalities. From this angle there are some interesting lights thrown upon him from time to time, both in the Tribune and elsewhere.

He steadfastly opposed Grant's candidacy for a third term. According to an entertaining bit of campaign gossip contained in the Tribune of May 7, 1880, Grant's managers had spread a story implicating Medill with E. B. Washburne in a plot to stab Grant, a story which was burlesqued by the St. Louis Republican in this fashion. "It is a conspiracy which has no equal in deadly malignity except the recent Nihilist plot to disturb the dinner and digestion of the Czar. According to the aforesaid author, Grant is to appear in the title role of a new and revised version of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, with Washburne as Brutus, Oglesby as Cassius, Shuman as Casca, and Joseph Medill as general manager and stage director. The killing business is to be done at Springfield, as near as possible to the base of Pompey Lincoln's statue, which will 'all the while run blood' if the property man can secure the necessary machinery. Brutus Washburne is the chief conspirator, claiming to be the life-long intimate personal friend of Caesar Grant, and even while writing a letter taking himself out of the presidential ring and promising aid and comfort to his

friend, he has been -- so goes the story -- in secret session with Medill, and between the two the details of the deviltry were arranged." Such editorial campaign repartee among the newspapers was often "spicy". We find the St. Louis Globe-Democrat making the unguarded statement that Medill has promised his vote to Grant if the latter will see that he is sent as a delegate to the national convention, and we find Medill replying in unequivocable terms, "It is a lie that any such statement was made 'authoritatively', and the reporter can't name his 'Grant man of state reputation' who made it. It is a lie that anybody received or carried the proposition named, and the whole statement is a contemptible falsehood."[1] One may note here the delicate and effective way in which each detail is first selected for condemnation, and then, lest something might escape, the whole story is damned in toto!

It was in this same campaign that Medill was one of Blaine's Illinois managers.[2] He supported him again in 1884, but in 1888 refused to join with him. The Philadelphia Telegraph (Republican) has this comment to make, "If our most estimable contemporary, the Chicago Tribune, can be believed, the great West, the votes of which are essential to Republican success, is not disposed to join the procession and rush Mr. Blaine into the position of the presidential candidate of the Grand Old Party against his will and in the face of positive declination.

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, May 13, 1880.
[2] Church, History Republican Party in Illinois, p. 135.

"The Tribune may be a little warm in this matter, but there can be no question of the fact that it is one of the strongest, if not the strongest, representative Republican journals of the West, and knows precisely what it is talking about, and the meaning of its language when it says, 'The plan to revive Blaine's candidacy and stampede the convention belongs to certain fool friends in the East, put forward and urged on by crafty, designing men in Wall Street.....'

"Mr. Blaine's fool friends' in the East may not like this, but there are chunks upon chunks of frozen fact in it..."[1]

Shelby M. Cullom was one of those with whom Medill was thrown at this time. In 1892 the Tribune again favored Blaine, and at this time, Cullom tells us, he himself supported Harrison, not so much because he preferred him as a candidate as because he was out of sorts with Medill for the way the Tribune had been treating him. "I was determined that Mr. Medill should not have his way," he says.[2] But the two were not always so out of harmony with each other. They had worked together for Blaine in 1884, and Cullom says of Medill in his autobiography, "I regarded him as one of the three really great editors of his day -- Horace Greeley, Henry Watterson, and Joe Medill.

"He made the Chicago Tribune one of the most influential papers of the United States. At times Medill and I were very friendly, and he gave me his hearty support. At other times he

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, May 19, 1888.
[2] Cullom, Fifty Years of Public Service, p. 252.

was against me, but we always remained on speaking terms at least, and I admired and respected him very much."[1]

Some of Medill's letters to Cullom give us interesting glimpses behind the scenes. The following was written soon after the passage of the Interstate Commerce Act, "There is an impression that he (the President) will probably let you name one of the commissioners and Reagan the other. If that be so, let me suggest among other names Mr. C. M. Wicker, manager Chicago Freight Bureau, for the position. You probably know hhim. He has had large experience in freighting, and is widely known to both shippers and railroad men, and is well liked. He is a friend of the law, and supported it vigorously while before Congress, writing some good letters in its explanation and defense for the Tribune. He is a sound Republican, though not much of a politician. You may find other and better men to recommend, but I don't think of any belonging to this state at this moment. I hear Judge Cooley's name mentioned. He is of course a first-class A No. 1 man, but I write on the hypothesis that your preference will be for an Illinois man if you are allowed to have a say in it."[2]

The following two extracts refer to the campaign of 1888; their comments on the tariff and the railroads are interesting as supplements to what we have seen before this of Medill's views on those subjects: "Whatever western man the New York

---

[1]Cullom, Fifty Years of Public Service, p. 439.
[2]Ibid., p. 440.

delegation (or the majority of them) favor will stand a good chance of getting it (the presidential nomination). It is almost impossible to figure out a victory without the electoral vote of New York. Indiana and Connecticut would be absolutely indispensable in the absence of New York. But even then we have doubtful states that voted for Blaine. Michigan, for instance, and the three Pacific coast states, in case any such man as Sherman, Harrison, or Hawley, who voted against restricting Chinese immigration, should be nominated. And then it remains to be seen what sort of action will be had in Congress on tariff reduction. If we are obliged to go before the people defending the present tariff, that is breeding trust monopolies all over the country, a nomination will not be worth the having. High protection is a nice thing for those who pocket it, but not so fascinating to the unprotected classes who have to pay the big bounties out of their products sold at free trade prices. All these things must be taken into consideration. .... All I can really say is, I am peering about in the dark for the strongest candidate, the most available man on an available platform, and even then we shall have desperate hard work to win in the face of the immense losses our party is suffering from the ravages in our rank and file, committed by the prohibitionists. We shall have to face a loss of fifty thousand in New York. How is that to be made good? and twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand in Illinois and five to seven thousand in Indiana, and thirty thousand in Michigan. How can we stand this loss of blood and

men?"[1] Later, "I have been reading the discussion in the Senate over your resolution in regard to the competition of the Canadian railways with our transcontinental freight charges. It is well enough, perhaps, to inquire into the matter, but I have a notion that the sharp competition is of great benefit to the masses. I know that I am a little heterodox in looking at the interest of the consumers instead of the railroad plutocrats, of the millions instead of the millionaires, but I can't held it. Senator Gorham had much to say in his speech about the undue advantage the Canadian roads had over ours by reason of Government subsidies received in constructing the Canadian railways, and to a line of steamers from Victoria to Japan and Hongkong. But his memory failed in the most astonishing manner to recall and perceive the fact that all the American roads west of the Mississippi to the Pacific have been enormously subsidized by our Government. In fact the subsidies amount to a good deal more than the actual total cost of the construction of them. For twenty years some of these roads have been plundering the American people by the most outrageous charges, and Congress, the people's representatives, have not lifted a finger to stop the rapacious robbery. And now, when the Canadian road, built by Government subsidies, begins to compete with the American roads built with Government subsidies, the latter who have pocketed hundreds of millions of subsidy spoils and overcharge plunder, appeal to the Senate to

---

[1]Cullom, Fifty Years of Public Service, pp. 440-1.

protect the scoundrels against a little healthy competition, and Senator Gorman pleads for the robbers on the floor of the Senate with tears in his voice! To whatever extent the competing Canadian roads cause our contiguous roads to lower their freights, so much the better for the public..... On one point I am in agreement with you, viz: that the British flag should be removed from this continent. This territory along our northern border should be incorporated into the American Union. It is ridiculous that Uncle Sam should allow a foreign power to hold it. We have as much need for it and right to it as England has for Scotland. If we had a respectable navy and a supply of fortification guns the problem would be easy of solution, and won't be until then.

"Each day convinces me more and stronger that if we lose this election McKinley--will be the cause. They make the party say in its platform 'Rather than surrender any part of our protective system, the whiskey, tobacco, and oleomargarine excises shall be repealed.' The Democrats are making much capital out of this. The tax on lumber and on salt are parts of our 'protective system! Now the Mc. plank discloses that rather than reduce the tax on lumber, the party will repeal the tax on oleo butter. How many farmers' votes will that gain us? Rather than allow any lowering of the high taxes on clothes, or salt, or lumber, or crockery, etc., the tax on whiskey must be repealed, and the old evil era of cheap rotgut and still-houses everywhere shall be restored! Do you really think that position will make votes for us this fall among the farmers? The final outcome

will probably turn on the character of the Senate bill, of which I am not sanguine. About two thousand millionaires run the policies of the Rep. party and make its tariffs. What modifications will they permit the Rep. Senators to support? We other thirty millions of Republicans will have precious little voice in the matter. Turn this over in your mind, and you will see that I am right. Whatever duties protect the two thousand plutocrats is protection to American industries. Whatever don't is free trade."[1]

After the election of 1890 he writes thus, "I did not think the blow would be a cyclone when I saw you just before the election. I knew that a storm was coming, but I did not dream that its severity would be so dreadful.

"The thing to do this winter is to repeal the McKinley Bill, and strengthen the reciprocity scheme by giving Blaine the sugar duties to trade on -- freeing no sugar before reciprocal equivalents are secured from respective cane-sugar tropical countries: or (2) fail to pass the chief appropriation bills, so that an extra session of the Democratic Congress must be called, and that party must deal with the tariff and be responsible for their action or failure to act; or (3) pass the apn. bills; adjourn; next year, have the Senate defeat the Dem. tariff bill, or the President veto it, and go before the people in 1892 on the issue of standing by the McKinley Bill till overwhelmed and wiped out in Nov. of that year, as the Whigs were in '52 when standing by the Forsythe-Stone law of Fillmore and Clay."....[2]

---

[1]Cullom, Fifty Years of Public Service, pp. 442-5.
[2]Ibid., p. 445.

Another political personality which was to prove of importance made its first appearance in the eighties. It is interesting to note that the rise of Theodore Roosevelt furnished Medill with a text for a little political sermon in the Tribune, "Since Assemblyman Roosevelt's success the young man in politics is becoming quite the thing in New York. There is an injurious prejudice among a large class of educated young men against taking part in public affairs on account of the prominence of ward-strikers and saloon orators. This predominance, however, is largely the fault of the respectable young men."[1]

A characteristic story is told of Medill's proceedings in the presidential campaign of 1888. "There was a general understanding after Mr. Medill had secured Chicago as the place in which the convention should be held that it should be considered as neutral ground and that the Chicago dailies should not make editorial comment on the doings of the convention and the various candidates until after the nomination. Nevertheless, day after day Mr. Medill had an editorial favoring Harrison and smashing other candidates. Finally Congressman Horr, of Michigan, a strong Gresham man, accompanied by a delegation of protestants, called at Mr. Medill's office to urge him to desist. After they had entered and Mr. Horr had begun to protest Mr. Medill laid down his ear-trumpet. Mr. Horr talked earnestly for thirty minutes, using every argument possible to change the policy of

---

[1]Chicago Tribune, March 24, 1884.

Mr. Medill in this matter.

"When he had finished Mr. Medill picked up his trumpet and asked, 'Did you say something, Mr. Horr?'

"The delegation fled at this reception, and Mr. Medill continued to do with the Tribune as he pleased, a privilege which he maintained to the last."[1]

Whether or not these details are accurate, in spirit the account is undoubtedly true to life.

Medill was a party politician, through and through, and could not conceive of any one being anything else. Once when Colonel Watterson proposed that some Democrats be appointed to the Supreme Bench during a Republican administration, he commented thus, "If the President, having the power to do so, should make the Supreme Court three-fourths Republican and one-fourth Democratic, he would in effect proclaim that the principles of his party were three-fourths right and one-fourth wrong. Mr. Watterson must know that a party can never compromise on its fundamental principles and survive. It must stand by what it believes to be right, or fall with it."[2]

His political service might, as we have previously noted, have been rewarded with office more than once if he had so chosen. In 1880 we find an exchange clipping and answer to this effect, "'Joseph Medill has been to see General Garfield. Will it be a place in the Cabinet, or a first-class foreign

---

[1] New York Tribune, March 27, 1899.
[2] Chicago Tribune, December 31, 1880.

mission?' --Evening Journal.

"You may betcher bottom dollar it will be a 'first-class' place or nothing, and nothing preferred."[1] He was too closely wedded to his newspaper editing to stray far afield.

He had a reputation for fighting hard and forgiving easily, with good humor. A certain story goes that once when Col. John F. Finerty, editor of The Citizen wanted a particular political job, Medill opposed it until he heard that Finerty had said of him that his name was "MacDe'il, and the blood of the old 'un runs in him till this day", which pleased Medill so that he changed his mind about Finerty.[2]

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, November 21, 1880.
[2] Oral statement to author by Medill McCormick.

CHAPTER VI. THE BUSINESS MANAGING OF A NEWSPAPER

Medill's marked individuality showed itself in his performance of the journalistic functions of the editor, just as it did in politics. Virility of thought, strength of conviction, and considerable executive and financial skill characterized his work. In his young manhood he started the Cleveland Leader on its career with an impetus which must have been vigorous, if we are to judge from its subsequent progress. His moulding of the purpose and character of the Chicago Tribune, with less influence at first, but later with an almost complete dictatorship that lasted twenty-five years, was very certainly a high achievement.

He came to the Tribune when it was less than ten years old. It had begun to take Associated Press dispatches,[1] and boasted ten columns to a page.[2] The Democratic Press, with which it consolidated in 1858, was like it Republican in politics, though it had been Free-Soil, and before that Democratic. The statistical articles compiled by one of its editors, William Bross, formed the beginning of the Tribune annual review -- the paper took a lively interest in the growth of Chicago and "the West". John L. Scripps, of the Press, was editor-in-chief from July 1, 1858, until March 28, 1861, when President Lincoln appointed him Postmaster of Chicago.[3]

---

[1]Moses, Ill. Hist. and Statist., v. 2, p. 946.
[2]Blanchard, v. 2, p. 231.
[3]Ibid., pp. 232-3.

"The Tribune Company" was formally incorporated February 18 of that year, with a capital stock of two hundred thousand dollars, divided among two hundred shares, an arrangement which has continued ever since.[1] On July 24 it bought out "Long John" Wentworth's paper, the Chicago Democrat, which had been founded by John Calhoun in 1833, as the first paper of the city.[2] Ray (1861-1863) and Medill (1863-1866) were succeeded in the editorship by Horace White, whose support of the Liberal-Republicans was in danger of undermining the Tribune's hold on a considerable portion of its subscribers when Medill stepped forward and demanded that White and Alfred Cowles sell him a controlling interest in the company.

His brother, Samuel J. Medill, who had become a reporter for the paper in 1864, and in 1868 city editor, was made managing editor, a position which he held until his death, in 1883.[3] Joseph Medill's son-in-law, Robert W. Patterson, who succeeded to this position, held it till Medill's death, in 1899, and for the last ten years or more of Medill's life was probably a more active force in the conduct of the paper than his chief. When William Bross and Alfred Cowles died, both in 1889, Medill became president of the company, George P. Upton vice-president, and Patterson secretary-treasurer.[4] Upton had been connected

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, June 10, 1897.
[2] Blanchard, pp. 255, 236.
[3] Chicago Tribune, June 10, 1897.
[4] Blanchard, p. 234.

with the Tribune since 1858:[1] he was a prominent editorial writer under Medill, along with Runnion and Sheahan. Of these last two Calvin Cobb says, "It might be of interest to note that Runnion and Sheahan, who wrote most of the hot Republican editorials, were both Democrats."[2]

During his first ten years on the Tribune, Medill managed its financial affairs in addition to his other work,[3] and seems to have been most successful in that capacity. The paper came through the bankruptcy of 1858 easily, announcing on January 1, 1859, that the property was now valued at $105,000, and proclaiming itself "a permanent institution in the northwest," "a profitable concern as well as a public necessity." Frederick F. Cook, who worked on both the Tribune and its rival the Times during the sixties and seventies, says, "The grip of the Tribune on advertising was too strong to be broken."[4] The returns of 1870 give Medill's income as $20,859; the paper was estimated to be yielding $150,000 a year then.[5] In buying more stock in 1874 Medill is said to have been aided by Marshall Field,[6] but he seems to have had little difficulty in clearing the obligation. Fifteen years later he refused an offer of four millions for the property, saying that it was earning ten per cent on that sum.[7]

---

[1]Oral statement to author by Geo. P. Upton.
[2]Letter to author from Calvin Cobb, April 11, 1916.
[3]Andreas, v. 2, p. 151.
[4]Cook, Bygone Days in Chicago, p. 333.
[5]Hudson, Frederic, Journalism in the United States, p. 204.
[6]Oral statement to the author by Elias Colbert.
[7]Abbott, Chicago Newspapers and their Makers, Review of Reviews, v. 11: 648.

At his death he left 107 shares of the stock, valued at two and one-half millions, besides two million dollars worth of bonds and real estate.[1]

The Tribune, especially through the early years of Medill's connection with it, paid particular attention to the business enterprises of Chicago and the surrounding region. Railroad building was occupying people's attention largely in 1856. That year the Illinois Central was opened to Chicago, and the C.B. and Q. to Burlington; the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul to Milwaukee and other roads were in course of construction. "Judging by the matter in the local press of that time", we are told, "one of the 'principal industries' of the people of Chicago would seem to have been participating in free excursions over the newly completed lines, or in banqueting or otherwise entertaining visitors from the cities with which Chicago was thus brought into direct communication for the first time."[2] Westward emigration and the Pacific railroad vied with the Illinois Ship Canal and the Chicago lumber trade as candidates for the reader's attention. Special columns were devoted to agriculture.

To Medill himself, news meant politics,[3] but nevertheless he put a great deal that was not political into the Tribune. Along with other Chicago newspapers the Tribune built up a considerable reputation for its general news service, progressing

---

[1] New York Tribune, March 26, 1899.
[2] Chicago Tribune, June 10, 1897.
[3] Oral statement to author by Fred Hall.

rapidly from the stage at which it stood at the outbreak of the Civil War of having only about a column and a half of telegraphic news per day. Medill was instrumental in bringing about the organization of the Western Associated Press, under a law which had been passed in Michigan, March 21, 1865. At the initial meeting, held at Louisville, Kentucky, November 22 and 23, Horace White, representing the Tribune, was made a director and member of the Executive Committee.[1] The Civil War had brought a great demand for speedy and efficient news service, but dispatches were expensive, on account of the cost of telegraphing: coopera-tion, such as the association furnished, was an advantage. Anoth-er result of the high pressure of the war times was the intro-duction of the Sunday issue, a thing which horrified good church-goers and caused much argument, till the Tribune at length came out with this not wholly polite ultimatum, February 15, 1865, "Having discussed the question of a Sunday paper in its moral and religious aspects, we venture to call the attention of the Evangelical Ministerial Union of Chicago to the business view of the situation. Both they and we are business men and sustain certain obligations and relations to each other as such, apart from the high obligations which, they on behalf of the pulpit, and we of the press, sustain to the public, as guides and repre-sentatives of public opinion. Among business men there is no rule of conduct more universally acceptable and expedient than that every business man shall mind his own business and leave every

---

[1]Andreas, v. 2, p. 500.

other business man perfectly free to attend to his business." So the Sunday papers stayed. A weekly Tribune was also published up until 1887.[1]

As we have shown, the paper appealed to various sorts of interests in its make-up. Under the long period of Medill's editorship, as earlier, it devoted considerable space to business and finance -- a regular Monday morning editorial on "The Business Situation" was a feature for some years. The "Agriculture" and "Husbandry" columns treated subjects now for the most part absorbed by trade papers. And there was the inevitable "Home" section. Quotations from the German newspapers were given a prominent place under the caption, "The Spirit of the German Press." Medill's penchant for oddities and curiosities of all kinds displayed itself in the clippings with which he filled up the columns. It is said that he was in the habit of selecting miscellaneous items which happened to attract his attention and sending them to the composing room marked "Must, J. M." The foreman set them up until they accumulated in such numbers that all of them could not possibly be used, and then changed the "Must" to "Musty".[3]

The Chicago Times under Wilbur F. Storey, was always the Tribune's deadly rival: the one never missed an opportunity of"getting back" at the other. And so, such compliments as this were not uncommon, "Since the Billstorean adopted its new and

---

[1]Blanchard, v. 2, p. 329.
[3]Statement at a lecture, by James Keeley.

valuable rule of going to press without the news, it has become very particular. It refuses any longer to take late dispatches from New York or Washington, and bases its refusal on high moral grounds. But it makes up for its deficiency of news occasionally by cribbing dispatches from the Tribune and printing them in a second edition...."[1] And again in the same strain, "Whenever the 3 a.m. Newsless commits a fraud it can be depended upon to furnish the proof of it. It is the most accommodating newsless paper in this respect in the United States, etc."[2]

Another editorial diversion took the form of an indiscriminate boosting of Chicago as compared with other cities. The Tribune crowed over the Chicago population totals in comparison with thœe of St. Louis, and the Chicago death rate as over against that of New York. The splendid climate of Chicago and its advantages as a health resort were another never-failing topic for self-congratulation. The following is one of Medill's frank comments on St. Louis doings: "The Tribune hopes that St. Louis may have a grand time with its veiled prophets carnival. Anything that helps to cherk up the old village and make it put on an appearance of gayety ought to be encouraged. We cheerfully commend her good taste, also, in keeping her prophets veiled. Those who have seen a St. Louis prophet invariably prefer him veiled."[3] Medill seems to have been inordiantely fond of such

---

[1] Chicago Tribune, September 1, 1881.
[2] Ibid., September 2, 1881.
[3] Ibid., August 9, 1886.

dainty thrusts. It was a trait, perhaps, of the old type of journalism, which he represented.

For he belonged to the now vanished order of "personal journalism", the journalism of the days when the editor was absolutely identified in the public mind with his paper. He was a prominent figure, and the editorials bore weight as his utterances. Horace Greeley of the New York Tribune, Samuel Bowles of the Springfield Republican, Murat Halstead of the Cincinnati Commercial, and Henry J. Watterson of the Louisville Courier-Journal were some of the men of this class. In their time the newspaper was not the great impersonal machine that it is today. Said the Fourth Estate upon the death of Medill, "The influence which such men.....exercised over the destinies of the country during that critical period in the nation's history which marked the abolition of slavery can not be demonstrated by mathematics. They were men of brain, of force, of character, and of great resources, and left a mark upon the pages of American history which can never be effaced..."[1] Medill's personal influence was undoubtedly great, and it seems to have been uniformly on the side of progress and good government.

The paper which he produced was vigorous, bright and fresh in its news columns, but at the same time conservative in policy. The editorials were strong and forceful--Medill believed in emphasizing them more, perhaps, than is done today. It was

---

[1] Fourth Estate, 10:4.

his policy to keep hammering away and repeating the ideas which he wished to enforce until they made an impression on the public mind. Eternal vigilance and eternal vigor he put into the making of the Tribune. As William Bross, for so many years his colleague in this "making" of the paper, says, "With two such honest, able, patriotic and scholarly men as Mr. Scripps and Dr. Ray, not to mention Mr. Medill, with his sharp, discriminating mind, his wide acquaintance with men and things, and his acute journalistic and broad common sense, is it any wonder the Tribune achieved a national reputation?"[1]

---

[1] Wm. Bross, History of Chicago. Chicago, 1876, p. 86.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

It has been found impossible to make a full collection of the papers and letters of Joseph Medill for this work. There are some in the possession of his family, concerning which Mrs. Eleanor Medill Patterson and Mr. Medill McCormick know, and there are legal records concerning him which belong to Mr. A. S. Trude, of Chicago, who was Mr. Medill's lawyer for the last twenty years of his life. It is probably as yet too near to his lifetime for any of these to be made public.

Chicago Historical Society Collection: Autograph Letters; The A. H. Burley Collection, v. 5, no. 60: Joseph Medill to A.H. Burley, December 1, 1871.

Medill, Joseph: Benjamin Franklin. Chicago, 1896. An address on the life of Franklin given before the Old-Time Printers' Association of Chicago, January 17, 1896. Pamphlet.

Medill, Joseph: On Lincoln's Last Speech; The Circumstances and Effect of its Delivery. McClure's Magazine VII: 319-31.

Medill, Joseph: The Payment of the Debt, A Review of the Ohio Democratic Financial New Departure before the Young Men's Republican Club, Columbus, Ohio, August 31, 1871. Pamphlet.

Medill, Joseph: This Abominable Tariff, Reply of Joseph Medill, Editor the Chicago Tribune, Blaine's principal Western newspaper organ, to Blaine's Letter of Acceptance. Political Tracts; Little Hatchet Series. Chicago Historical Society Collection, Political Campaign 1884 - Documents, v.5, no.48.

Letters to the author from:

Carr, Clark E., Galesburg, Illinois, April 17, 1916.

Cobb, Calvin, Editor the Idaho Statesman, Boise, Idaho, April 11, 1916.

Keeley, James, Editor the Chicago Herald, May 11, 1916.

Hay, Logan, Springfield, Illinois, April 21, 1916.

McParland, James, Denver, Colorado, formerly of the Pinkerton Detective Agency of Chicago, May 9, 1916.

Patterson, Eleanor Medill, Washington, D. C., January 21, 1916.

Watterson, Henry J., Editor the Louisville Courier Journal, April 8, 1916.

White, Horace, New York City, April 20, 1916.

Interviews by the author, December 1, 1915 - May 1, 1916, with:

Colbert, Elias, Member of the Tribune staff from 1863 for over twenty years.

Hall, Fred; a member of the Tribune staff from May 1867 through Medill's editorship.

McCormick, Medill; grandson of Joseph Medill.

Patterson, Joseph Medill; grandson of Joseph Medill.

Trude, A. S.; lawyer for Medill from about 1889.

Upton, George P.; of the Tribune staff from 1859.

Lecture by James Keeley, Editor the Chicago Herald, and formerly of the Tribune staff under Medill.

Contemporary Newspapers--

The Chicago Press and Tribune, January 1, 1859, to October 25, 1860.

The Chicago Tribune, October 25, 1860, to March 18, 1899. Ibid., July 8, 11, 31, 1918.

The New York Tribune, 1861, 1877, 1878, 1880, 1881, 1883, 1887, 1892, 1894, 1895, 1899.

The Rushville Times, 1870.

The Union and Gazette, 1869, 1870.

Biographies and Memoirs of Contemporaries, and Contemporary Histories:

Abbott, Willis J,: Carter H. Harrison, A Memoir.

Andreas, A. T.: History of Chicago from the earliest period to the present time. Chicago, 1885. 2 vol.

Bancroft, Frederic: Life of Seward. New York, 1900.

Bennett, Fremont O.: Politics and Politicians of Chicago, Cook County, and Illinois. Chicago, 1886.

Blaine, James G.: Twenty Years of Congress. Norwich, Connecticut, 1884-6. 2 vol.

Bross, Wm.: History of Chicago. Chicago., 1876.

Carr, Clark E.: My Day and Generation. Chicago, 1908.

Cook, Frederick F.: Bygone Days in Chicago. Chicago, 1910.

Cullom, Shelby M.: Fifty Years of Public Service. Chicago, 1911.

Greeley, Horace: Political Text-Book for 1860. New York, 1860.

Hollister, O. J.: Life of Schuyler Colfax. New York, 1886.

Hudson, Frederick: Journalism in the United States. 1873.

Ingersoll, L. D.: Life of Greeley. San Francisco, 1873.

Journal of Constitutional Convention 1869-70. Springfield, Illinois.

McCormack, Thos. J., Editor: Memoirs of Gustave Koerner. Cedar Rapids, 1909.

Merriam, George S.: Life and Times of Samuel G. Bowles. New York, 1895. 2 vol.

Moses, John: Illinois, Historical and Statistical. Chicago, 1889-92. 2 vol.

Moses and Kirkland: History of Chicago. Chicago, 1895.

Newton, Joseph F.: Lincoln and Herndon. Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1910.

Nicolay and Hay: Life of Abraham Lincoln. New York, 1890. 10 vol.

Seidle, Thos. C.: Photos of the Statesmen and Politicians of the United States. Reading, Pennsylvania, 1894.

Selby, Paul: Genesis of the Republican Party in Illinois. Pamphlet. 1904.

Tarbell, Ida M.: Life of Abraham Lincoln. New York, 1902. 3 vol.

Welles, Gideon: Diary. Boston, 1911.

White, Horace: Life of Trunbull. Boston, 1913.

White, Horace: Lincoln and Douglas Debates. Pamphlet. Chicago, 1914.

Woodburn, James A.: Life of Thaddeus Stevens. Indianapolis, 1913.

Contemporary Periodicals:

Abbott, Willis J.: Chicago Newspapers and their Makers. Review of Reviews XI: 646.

Armstrong, F. Leroy: The Daily Papers of Chicago. The Chautauquan XXVII: 538.

Banner of Gold: Official paper of the Bi-Chloride of Gold Clubs and Keeley Institutes. Chicago, May 7, 1892.

Fourth Estate X: 4 editorial.

Freeman, Wm. H.: The Press Club of Chicago - a history. Chicago, 1894.

White, L. L.: Western Journalism. Harper's Monthly LXXVII: 678.

Manuscript life in office of the Chicago Tribune by Miss Dodge, 1907

General Secondary Sources:

Blanchard, Rufus: Discovery and Conquests of the Northwest with the History of Chicago. Chicago, 1900. 2 vol.

Church, Charles A.: History of the Republican Party in Illinois, 1854-1912. Rockford, 1912.

Currey, J. Seymour: Chicago: Its History and Its Builders. Chicago, 1912. 3 vol.

Eddy, Thos. M.: Patriotism of Illinois. Chicago, 1865-6.

Fish, Carl Russel: Civil Service and the Patronage. New York, 1905.

Hurd, Harvey and Sheppard, Robt. D.: Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois, Chicago, 1906.

Kirkland, Joseph and Caroline: Story of Chicago. Chicago, 1894.

Kleeberg, Gordon S. P.: Formation of the Republican Party. New York, 1911.

Randall and Ryan: History of Ohio. New York, 1912. 5 vol.

Scott, Franklin W.: Newspapers of Illinois. Springfield. 1910.

Smith, Theodore Clark: The Liberty and Free Soil Parties in the North-west. New York, 1897.

Sparks, Edwin E.: Lincoln-Douglas Debates. Springfield. 1908.

Wilson, Woodrow: Division and Reunion. New York, 1907.

Winsor, Justin: Narrative and Critical History of America. Boston, 1888. 8 vol.

The Chicago Tribune: June 10, 1897, Jubilee Number, Fiftieth Anniversary.

The Chicago Tribune: March 17, 1899.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 082198745